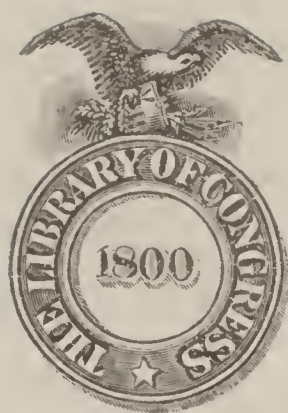


MOODS AND MOMENTS



CARL HEINRICH



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MOODS AND MOMENTS



BY
CARL HEINRICH

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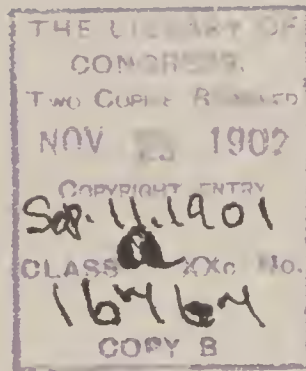
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The Procession of Demons:
A Prologue.

MOODS AND MOMENTS.

The Procession of Demons : A Prologue.

'Twas the wildest night of the winter.
The earth was lost in a white-waved sea.
The branches bent down before the storm,
And the darkness was pale with the snowflakes.

In my study the light had faded.
The fire in red embers was dying,
And the gloom of the winter's night was on all
things.

I sat as one weary of strife,
For the gloom of the winter's night was like-
wise upon me.

The page of the past and the present was empty
of meaning,
And the page of the future was veiled in the
darkness.

Of a sudden a voice spoke beside me,
And in the vacant space appeared a form—
A human form but for its angel radiance,

A maiden form but for its godly mein,
A ghostly form but for its human warmth.
It was a maid that spoke;
But her voice was that of a man contented.

“ Youth,” she said, “ I come to thee;
For it is well that thou shouldst know me.
In the language of man my name is Love.
I bloom in the lilac and lily,
In the roses white and red.
In the song of the robin I sing;
And the voice of the sea is my voice.
In the springtime my garment is green;
A dark-leaved mantle is mine in the autumn;
And white is my robe in the winter.
I joy in the birth of a flower,
In the passions and sports of the jungle,
In the union of maiden and man.
I follow the stars in their courses;
And peoples are happy in my name.
Look on me, youth, and know me.
Take me unto the bosom of thy soul,
Adoring first the maiden then the God.
Let thy pen move forever at my bidding;
For nature lives in me.
I mould thy dreams and longings;

The Procession of Demons. 11

And hold thee in the hollow of my hand.
Behind the ways of destiny I am."

The maiden gone, a warrior took her place—
An iron-visaged chief, no longer young,
And bearing on his front the dent
Of many battles. Thunder was his speech.

"Hear, boy! my words are few.
Take down thy histories!
Look in the chronicles
Of yesterdays and days that are!
Spell out the writ and living page!
Find what must be! and then——"

"And then, most dreadful specter, what?"
I cried. The vision pondered, frowned and
spake:

"Thou art too young to hear;
Yet speak what thou dost see!
Then let the God of battles point thy course!"

With that he vanished.
A moaning shuddered in the air;
And of the shudder came a hag—
A specter more than fiend and less than woman.

Her hair hung straight and bloody round her
face,
And twined about her famine-withered form.
Except for this she stood in shameless naked-
ness.

Her lips had parted o'er her yellow fangs.
Two tearwells filled the sockets of her skull;
And shredded flesh hung to her nails.
She spoke as one in pain:—

“ Forget me not, sweet youth!
My name is Misery.
Where there is life I am;
And I endure forever.
I breathe upon the flower; it is deadly.
In the jungles I make hate and endless war.
I smite the abundant earth with famine.
Its shades I fill with fever;
And among its peoples I spread corruption and
disease.
Envy and strife I bring into the council halls
of men.
I make ambition seem a wretched thing;
And I ordain that they who rise shall tread the
fallen.
Whate'er is beautiful I mar with ugliness;

The Procession of Demons. 13

And things most holy I defile.
I make the voice of love temptation unto sin;
And pain and shame the end of loving.
I strike the mother from her child,
Draw friend from friend,
And set blood-bonded men at war.
I make the word of faith damnation for the
 weak;
And to adoring incense add the stench of perse-
 cution.
I glory in the carnage of the battle-field;
And find a consolation in the fruitless toil of
 millions.
I am the second voice of God—
The after echo of the universal song.
All things that live must call me mother;
For I am Misery.
Remember me! Remember me forever, youth!"

Then rose a comely matron in her place
A matron neither ravishing to look
Upon, nor graced with the proud dignity
Which qualifies the empress of the heart.
Her charm was of a household nature, meant
For daily use among the changing scenes
Of life. Her beauty was less eloquent

For what it spoke than what it left unsaid.
'Twas such as grows from day to day more dear,
As day by day it more reveals the soul
Within. She smiled, but slightly, as she spoke:

“My son, I would thy close companion be,
That thou mightst view all things with equal
eye.

I'd have thee look not over long upon
The serious face of life. With too much gazing
On th' nearby red and somber hues, the eye
Grows blind to them beyond. Hope not for joy
Unbroken; joy would not be joy were all
Its days the same. Sweet smiles would lose
their sweetness

Did tears come not between. Nor ask, my son,
Too often for the essence of man's life—
The central thought in human fellowship.
Scorn not the trappings of the world or th'
man.

They serve no less a purpose than the soul.
Find cause to think, and cause to smile, in all
That is. What now is pain to-morrow shall
Be peaceful rest. What now is bliss shall be
To-morrow, likewise, rest. So learn to smile;
For by this art alone can truth be found,

The Procession of Demons. 15

And balance struck twixt dark and light. But
more

Than all, I charge thee, read thy soul, and what
Thy God hath written there with modest
thoughts;

For there is no thing yet so high, but there
Is higher; naught so low, but there is lower;
And in the eyes of God all stand the same.
Fail not my counsel, son. 'Tis thy salvation,
Truth's beacon blinds, and th' venom of sin's
sadness

Destroys the soul that learns not how to smile.

Ballads.

BALLADS.

1.

The Knight's Song.

THE night was dark, and the wind was wild,
And the forest wailed like a helpless child.
Huge castles frowned on the country round;
And the heavens breathed with a stifled sound
 The despairing notes of war.

The moon shone red from a cloud-veiled sky
Which revealed no star to the anxious eye.
No glad-voiced bird let its song be heard.
Not a branch bowed low, nor a leaflet stirred,
 But it voiced impending woe.

One song alone, of a gentler strain—
Like a faint far gleam in a night of rain—
Was borne on high by the angels nigh
To the halls beyond of the mouldy sky.

'Twas a soldier's serenade:

“Loved one, my angel, pure and fair,
Be thou my guiding star.
Lead me to battle with thy prayer.

Watch o'er me from afar.
Love, be my guiding star!"

'Twas still and dark on the northern plain,
Where the soldier lay mid the heaps of slain
He raised his head from his frozen bed,
To repeat his song to the listless dead,
Ere the morning's silence fell:

"Loved one, my angel, pure and fair,
Be thou my guiding star.
Open the heavens with thy prayer.
Watch o'er me from afar.
Love, be my guiding star!"

2.

The Eastern Bride.

It was a night of wondrous calm,
So innocent of all but the sleeper's sigh
That a voice seemed ever waiting nigh.
The wind reposed in the folding leaf;
The serpent lay still as a hunted thief;
The insect murmured not o'er the pool
Where it dipped its fevered wings to cool;
The lotus folded its petals tight;
The stars, like ashes aglow with light,
Made the stillness even yet more still;
The moon, as it mounted above the hill,
Caused not a ripple of sound to wake;
And the passing moments all but spake.

It was a night so wondrous calm.

Mid palm-veiled hills in a palace lone
The sultan's captive slept.
Her heaving breast
Was sore oppressed;

For dream thoughts told with what helpless
moan

Her Grecian lover wept.
In her naked beauty she lay
On a divan of tiger skins,
Wond'ring if time could take away
The shame of unwilful sins.

With pearls were her ebon tresses wound,
A jeweled girdle her full hips bound—
A girdle of rubies and opals that burned
Like feverish stars whene'er she turned
A limb or loosed an amorous sigh.
A gauze, as fine as the lights that lie

Inside of the curve of the scimiter moon,
Enveloped her form in its silken clasp.
And an odor too rare for the sense to grasp
Made sweet the air at her ev'ry gasp,
And caused the o'er-luscious poppies to swoon.
But all her beauty she valued not,
Nor the glory of being the sultan's bride;
For her loved one could not be forgot,
Tho a monarch languished at her side.
She had held Mahomet in her embrace.
His hot kiss lingered still on her face;
But her longing lay with the Grecian boy

Who first had opened her life to joy.
She slept; but slumber brought no rest
To her bitter love-o'er-laden breast.
The gauze enfolded her flesh like a flame;
And the girdle burned like a belt of shame.
For her there was no balm
In the night's un murmuring calm.

In the midst of her sleep she had a dream
Wherein the unbroken quiet did seem
To cease. A sound as of many wings
In motion, the murmur the breeze oft brings
From the far rock-bounded unrestful sea,
The whirl of Æolian harps set free
In the wind her fancy seemed to hear;
And over all a song rang clear—
The song of her lover approaching near.
'Twas a joy-mad music she heard; but the strain
Was ever jarred by a note of pain
Which rose with a sob and was gone again.
'Twas a wild, strange music that smote her
ear:

Oh! sleep no more, my love, to-night;
For I come to set thee free.

Thru hateful lands,
O'er thirsty sands
Have I journeyed long for thee.
Oh! Heaven, forget not my faithful love!

I come with naked sword to-night,
To regain the maid I lost,
Tho ev'ry flood
Run thick with blood,
And my soul in hell be tossed.
Oh! Father in heaven, forsake me not!

A galley rides near shore to-night,
That shall bear thee far away
To lovely isles
Where God still smiles,
And the sultan has no sway.
Oh! guide and protect us, great God of love!

Be mine, sweet maid, once more to-night.
Let me feel thy love-warm breath.
With passioned kiss
Transfix my bliss,
Or make sweet a bitter death.
Oh! Father in heaven, hast thou forgot?

The music ceased. The night grew calm.
The captive's dream dissolved. She woke.
In her waking ears a terror spoke.
She turned; and beheld, in the full of the light,
In robe and in gem-strewn turban white,
Mahomet the sultan! Silent he stood,
As a tiger who waits his prey in the wood.
O'er his garments the ghastly moonbeams
 played,
And quivered along the bloody blade
He held outstretched. And most mildly he
 spake;
But his words were amber embedding a snake:

A Christain came to the sultan's shore,
 To steal from Mahomet's side
 His youngest, loveliest bride;
But he who came shall return no more;
 For the son of the prophet hath eyes.

A song arose from the Christian's throat.
 He sang the sultana's name,
 Revealing her master's shame.
And red with blood was the closing note;
 For the children of Alla are wise.

A last farewell e'er the darkness flee
Farewell to the sultan's bride!
To-morrow at ebbing tide
She sleeps forever beneath the sea;
That the faithful in honor may rise.

The maiden heard; and thick and slow
The stream of her anguish seemed to flow
She voiced no pain, no murmur of woe;
But her heart beat hard at its bounds,
Like a captive beast made mad with wounds.
Her flesh was by pulsing fevers burned;
And the girdle writhed like a serpent spurned.—
Without the night was wondrous calm!

Songs.

SONGS.

1.

My Song.

OF love my song shall be,
Of love that grieves
But leaves
A high tranquillity.
A diamond crush'd
Is dust,
And cuts the uncut stone.
The trodden vine
Gives wine;
And tears for the sin atone.
A wounded heart
Will smart,
And bleed till its life is gone.
But I sing not of stone, nor of vine,
Nor the failing life, nor the fatal wine.
The seed that dies
To rise
An ever-verdant pine;
Of this my song shall be—
Of love both human and divine.

2.

First Love.

WHEN first the infant smiles,
Then love is born,
Then blooms the morn
Of a soul's uneven day.
Oh! ye who shelter love's thin faint flame,
first lit in infant smiles,
Protect from tempest and mist this flame,
Shelter it long,
And leave it strong,
That its warmth pass not away;

For heavy's the wind and dense the rain
That must fall ere the day be done;
And cold is the curse and sharp the pain
That will strike if a love begun
Shall cease, if its fire be lit in vain.

Oh! ye who shelter love's thin faint flame,
First lit in infant smiles,
Shelter it long,
And leave it strong;
For it need not pass away.

3.

Remembrance.

I sit alone.

The day is past;
The rain falls fast;
The trees make moan;
The hail strikes hard as stone;
'And I in sadness sit alone.

I close my eyes.

A stillness grows;
A faint breeze blows;
The dead days rise;
Remembrance brings love-sighs;
And love-words, as I close my eyes.

Our last embrace,

And kiss-bound vow
Come to me now;
Across my face
Remembered fevers chase;
I feel once more our last embrace.

I wake again.

Rough thunders swell

The tempest's hell;

Thick falls the rain,

Surcharged and shrill with pain.

Am I indeed awake again?

4.

The Soul's Realities.

I know yon cloud is but a mist,
Yon music but the noise of leaves
Slow-shaken by an aimless wind.
All this my reason b'lieves.

My high ambition's but a dream
Which morn's fulfilling may not see.
The love I feign for future years
Is far too sweet to ever be.

Yet cloud and wind-song move my heart,
And comfort me in my distress.
My dream I value more than life;
And love I daily live to bless.

5.

Renunciation.

'Tis better so—
My angel said—
Tho the darkness smite thee sore,
Love's happy glow
Now shivers dead,
And may never kindle more.
'Tis better so!

The candle dims the starry beam
Bright with the light of years.
The soul's most splendid beacons seem
Pale thru our veiling tears.
Be calm, be strong, my child!
Thou'lt find the darkness mild
When tears shall cease their flow;
And the beacon star shall guide
When the candle's flame has died.
'Tis better so!

No loving breast may be a rest
To thy worldly-weary head;

But so 'tis best. Thou art more blest
That thy feet must ever tread
On a lonely star-lit road,
That thy heart hath no abode.

'Tis better so!

Thy soul shall with deeper calm be filled.
Thy heart shall with fiercer love be thrilled.
And thy feet shall tread where the heroes trod.
And thy breast shall burn with the flame of
God.

'Tis better so!

6.

Jennie.

LIKE a swallow that rests in its flight
From wood to wood,
In pensive mood,
Like a beacon beheld thru the night
By a mariner tempest-toss'd,
Like a melody found and lost,
Half understood,
Like an azure rift in a leaden sky,
Like a fragrance caught by a passer-by,
Is my Jennie.
While she is near
I'll shed no tear,
No pain I'll fear;
But ah! the woe,
The sorrow when she shall go!
My Jennie!

7.

The Star.

I SAW a glimmer in the deep.
I knew not if to smile or weep;
For angel whispers said:
Rejoice with bended head,
A star is born to-night.

Now, love, I know thou art the star
That shines so radiant, so far.
My path may not encompass thine,
I may not cross the black abyss,
To melt thee with a lover's kiss;
But ever shall thy rays be mine,
To guide me thru the night.

Watch, love, my lonely sphere,
Unto the deep give ear;
And thru the darkness thou may'st hear,
When my poor light shall die,
A benediction-breathing sigh.
Then let the angels say:

Rejoice with bended head;
A pain has passed away,
Another love is dead,
A star has gone to-night.

8.

Farewell.

WE'LL sing no more of love, sweet maid,
Nor murmur words of woe.
Let parting leave us not afraid;
For God has willed it so.
A voice within speaks low.
It bids me smile and go.

Think not I wish thee aught but well.
All happiness be thine.
May love-light ever shine
Undimmed about thy head.
May glad dreams ever spread
White wings above thy bed.
May flowers ever fragrant smell:
And may thy marriage bell
Prove no funereal knell.
Be happy, maid, and free.
Leave sorrowing to me
Who must with grief grow old
While love's hearthstone turns cold.

Farewell, sweet maid! I'd be thy friend;
Thy soul from sorrow I'd defend.
I'd be thy life-long friend.
Be thou my memory!

9.

Last Love.

DEAR Jesus, master, man!
I'd grasp thy hand across the years
I'd know thy inward-flowing tears.
 My soul I would free
 Of meaningless fears,
And of the suffering that sears.
 I'd labor to be,
 Like thee,
 A perfect man.

Teach my soul a love like thine!
Fill me with the will divine
 To lessen human woe,
 Some blessing to bestow
 On those who come and go.
Teach me to taste the bitter sweet.
Teach me with eager lips to greet
 Whatever cross be mine.
 And let me grow to be,
 Like thee,
 A love-led man.

10.

The Unsung Song.

LIKE perfume of a rose unblown,
Our sweetest song must sleep.
No ear
May hear
The melody we keep
Muted within our hearts.
Like music of a world unknown,
That song as truly lives.
The happiness it gives
Only with life departs.

Eight Pieces.

NIGHT PIECES.

1.

The Spirit of Evening.

As the buds of heaven one by one
Opened their leaves of light,
And the wind's warm breathing, just begun,
Wafted the lilac fume,
A maiden, garbed in a gauze of white,
Stepped from the wood-world's gloom,
And over the sleeping grass took flight;
And parted her lips in song as she flew:

“ I am the spirit of ev'ning,
Goddess of love,
And she who nightly deepens thy dreams.
Green will I gather thy grieving.
Chorals above,
And flowers below are thine to follow me.
In my amber hair I'll wind thee.
With my warm white arms I'll bind thee.
The colors of cloud-film fringing the moon,
The music of warblers throated in tune
I'll give thee nightly, filling thy dreams

With loveliness, light and wonder;
And, parting the years asunder,
All things I'll reveal thereunder.
Yea! more will I do if thou but follow me."

And I followed the maiden far that night
'Till she faded away in the mist of the
 morning,
'Till the buds of heaven one by one
 Folded their leaves of light.

And now—tho I love the virgin morn
Tho I love to watch a sinking sun
 Shadow a range of hills—
 Deeper's the joy that thrills
My soul when the skies themselves adorn
With stars and the deep-voiced night is born.
 Then my spirit communes with the spirit of
 ev'ning;
 Music from other spheres,
And songs that in joy remember pain
 Float to my list'ning ears,
 Bidding lowly distresses be stilled;
 And my heart with a fragrance is
 filled—
The fragrance of flowers after rain.

2.

Poppies.

Nod, pale poppies! Nod in the sleeping garden!
The burden of life breathes deep;
The multitude breathes in sleep,
Hushed; and day's loud labor is now forgotten.

Bells intone, calling to Easter morrow.
The midnight is glad with bells;
And mildly the music swells.
Nod, pale poppies! Nod thou thy red and yellow!

Prayers on wings of chime-tones are carried
heavenward,
To wander among the stars,
To laze till a spirit jars
Music from them, and casts it around the sleepers.

Thou pale poppies, pray in thy red and yellow;
And I am within at prayer;
And calm is the night and fair,
Filled with spirit voices, with prayer and quiet.

Something unknown of day is abroad to-night
—a glory—

A passion subdued—a love

From earth and the worlds above;

Something I know not—an angel, perhaps, that
my soul has created—

An angel with stars in her hair and with
poppies as girdle and raiment.

3.

Serenade.

Oh, my love, leave thy bow'r,
While the eve's in the hour,
While our souls feel the pow'r
 Of embracing!
Come, love! leave the shadow
 Of cloistering home!
Come, love! we'll be glad tho
 We ever must roam
From the warm-lit hearth and the rose-twined
 roof
Where the later love is from pain made proof.
 Tho we ever must roam
 From the child-bearing home,
We can feel no loss; for our song shall be long
 with delight,
And our coldest kisses shall throb as a sob in
 their might,
And the stars shall lead and shall light us from
 night unto night
 Of embracing!
Oh love! I have seen and caressed thee.

In wildest of dreams have I pressed thee;
But only in dreams,
In day-destroyed dreams!
Let us languish divided no longer;
Lest passion depart ere our souls can grow
stronger
In passion, lest night shall be with us no longer.
Let us journey together with love!

4.

A Vision.

I BEHOLD thee beyond of the year now passing,
With the sounds and the shadows of twilight
 round thee;
And the last of the songs with the day is dying;
 And sleep comes softly unto the hilltops.

Is it sadness I read in thy drooping eyelids,
As the smile of the evening star meets thy
 gazing?
Or a happiness fashioned from joy and sorrow,
 And blessed by calm communion with
 goodness?

On beholding thee haloed in evening glory
I would pray, tho my lips are for prayers un-
 fashioned,
That the tears of thy sorrows may flow not
 harshly,
 And that thy soul may smile as it slumbers.

5.

Night Thoughts.

WITHIN the west the crescent moon hung large
And low, half dimmed in rippled gauzy clouds;
And in the east a soundless light'ning flashed
Repeatedly; and stars filled all between.

Upon a hillock sat two friends, and gazed
Across this sky and spoke their inmost thoughts:
Their yester trials; their dreams of days to come
When hunger should be less among the people;
Their purple visions of triumphant war,
Of bloodless, tearless war for those whom men
Oppress, and gracious knights may not defend;
Their vague expectance of the final sleep;
Their present happiness in being near
To smell the odor of the unseen flower,
To hear the longing beat of distant waves,
To feel the tremble of the slow-blown leaves,
To sit beneath the vault of gleaming years
In fellowship of dreams and high ambition.

And when these friends had voiced their in-
most thoughts,
They gazed across the heaven,—silent, each
In wonder what that sky might mean in words;
And what the song, now throbbing in their
breasts,
Could sing to man's emotion or his understand-
ing.

The Twilight Country:
A Fantasy.

The Twilight Country.

I LEFT my books in utter weariness.

Their thoughts grew heavy on me like the
mist

Upon a sleeping city. Slowly seemed
The sky to deepen. Slowly spread the sun-
set.

Beyond the nearby smoke-drenched buildings
stood

The mountains, mantled silver-blue with twi-
light—

The quiet emblems of a great unrest,
A once-convulsing passion, now at peace.
Above them burned a sky which might have
rimmed

The mouth of hell, or blazed the gates of
heaven.

'Twas red; a rolling mass of deepest red
Which shot thin spears of vivid crimson
round

In radiations, e'en unto the zenith,

And made a seeming distance past the mountains.

This view for many moments held me tranced;

When a warbled peal burst bright from the airy,
And a bird of a day-cloud whiteness of feather,

Flying to westward,
Flew 'gainst the sunset,
Flew toward the mountains,
Breasted with crimson.

A spirit of passion and pureness
Flew far to westward,—and vanished.

Upon my revery that cry had fallen,
And strangely moved me.

I felt as one must feel who, newly
wakened,

Hears a far-off footfall,

Who, betwixt the midnight and the
morning,

Hears a half-lost footfall;

And wearily longing for a land of
rest,

My spirit loosed its bonds,

And followed with the sunset-
breasted bird,

The Twilight Country. 59

And passed beyond the dark'ning
mountains,
Passed to twilight meadows
Far beyond the snow-peaks.

Another land I found, explored by none and
nameless,—
A land of gentle billows purple-gray at sun-
down,—
A land of many wand'ring, slowly-rolling
rivers,—
Of little rivers banked by lilies, grassy hills,
And scattered pine-groves in whose midst small
gothic bowers,
Of whitest marble, shone;—all this enveiled in
twilight.
And soon to meet me came a band of white-
robed pilgrims,—
A band of sick robed silver sandaled pilgrims
came
From out the nearest grove, and bade me wel-
come, searched
Me with their violet eyes, and, smiling, bade me
welcome.
The eldest of the pilgrims took my hand, and
spoke:—

“Brother, we have waited for thy coming
long;

And many times we feared lest thou mightst
lose

Thy way among the high hills of the east.

Henceforth this twilight land shall be thy
home;

And peace and high content, which ever seeks
For higher things, shall be thy portion.

Come!

The youths and maidens speak thy name and
wait thee.”

And then they took me to a grove-shrined foun-
tain pool,

And bathed me there in waters of a gradual
coolness;

In gently-heaving waters of a gradual coolness
They washed my weary pains and travel dust
away;

And silver sandals bound they to my rested
feet;

And garbed me in a siver-girdled robe of white
And clinging silk; and gave me wine to drink;
and all

Drank with me,—crystal wine from cool-
rimmed crystal goblets.

Then to the nearest gothic bower moved our
band,

And entered,—entered there and stood a mo-
ment while

My full soul eased itself of sighs of ecstasy.

The bower in the dim light of the ev'ning
seemed

A grove transformed to marble,—seemed a tem-
ple grove

Of milk-white melting marble. Silent stood we
there

To feel its purifying whiteness,—silent stood
And listened; for, within, a mellow-throbbing
harp

Made all the dim recesses quiver with its music,
And filled us with a joy that wishes not for
speech.

A moment thus our band remained; but soon
the harp

Was mute, while round us many hundred silver
globes

Of tiny size began to glow with light. Then
moved

We to a smaller room, and joined the youths and
maidens.

These seemed to know me as a friend returned
from absence,—

A friend who never had been strange, but only
absent.

They kissed me joyfully upon the lips, and
spoke:—

“Brother, why have you so long remained
away?

The twilight hour is sad, the harp sings not,
And vacant is each breast when you are gone;
More vacant than the seat you leave unfilled,
More vacant than the song you leave unsung.
But now we have you back, our hearts shall
hold

You fast.—Come! watch with us the night’s
beginning.”

And o’er the purpled earth and on the sky we
gazed

And saw them deepen,—saw the stars begin to
quiver;

And thru the snowy casement, thru the stirring
pines

We saw the moonlit, broad, refulgent river,—
The central river of this twilight country lit
Upon its wave-tops by a spring-tide moon new-
risen.

The Twilight Country. 63

All thru the ev'ning thus we gazed on the sky
and meadow;
And held familiar discourse, speaking nobly,
freely,
As members of a brotherhood where all have
thoughts
Harmonious, and where each feels the other's
joy.
All thru the early night hours sat we by the case-
ment,
Till darkness bade us sleep. Then one by one
we went
To rest, I lingering till each had sought his
couch;
For so unweary seemed the air, so soft the
sounds,
So cool the touch of night that sleep was less de-
light
Than wakefulness. And when at last I, like-
wise, sought my bed,
'Twas not for slumber but to lie awake,—to lie
Unrobed upon my couch, and feel the breeze
blow o'er me,—
To lie soft-pillowed, still, and, thru the high-
arched windows,

To watch the ever-rising star groups, and to
hear

The low intoning of the pines arpeggio-swept
By gusts of wind,—to hear the gentle lash of
waters,—

The river's lap and splash against its sedgy
banks,—

The sound of water running swift thru sedge
and lilies.

And, as I listened, some late harpist smote his
harp;

And note by note a warbled chord welled out;
and I slept;

Nor dreamed I, yet was sweetly conscious that
I slept.—

With the first white beam of day in the east
I left my sleep and rejoined my compan-
ions,

With them to feel the delights of the dawn.
The sky was a pale and soft-glowing sap-
phire.

The wavy earth was a tender green,
And glittered with dew as with water-
pearls,

The Twilight Country. 65

Pink-flushed were the fluffy eastern cloud-
lets,

Lilac-dyed were the clouds of the zenith;
And the thin-drawn veil of the west was
gray.

'Amid the earth's sprig-budding green
Lilies and yellow poppies abounded.
The glittering river rippled with light.
The marble buildings, white-winged birds,
And the silken robes of the pilgrims
All flashed with the mirthful glory of
dawn.

All the earth was glad with a budding glad-
ness;

And the seashell-tinted sky, and our hearts,
Like the earth, were filled with the throb of
joy.

The day, however, once begun
In fullness, the morning table cleared
Of flowers, fruits, and empty wine
cups,
We left the grove, and joined the
army
Of pilgrims moving westward. All

The morn we marched in slow procession ;

The youths and maidens leading, arm
In arm, with laughter, dance, and
song ;

The elders following in fashion
More suited to their snowy years ;
The children skipping at our sides
In sportive glee. Indeed, 'twas more
A reasoned ramble than a march ;
For ever and anon we paused
T' explore some wayside grove,
From whose green caverns infant
voices,

With eager pipings, heralded
A new transcendant beauty. Oft
We stopped to pluck the peeping
flower,

Or bruise the roadside grape against
Our gentle thirst ; but never sore
Nor hot with travel, for the road
We trod was smooth and gave no dust,
While overhead an arch of leaves
Permitted only gentle beams
To warm our journey. All the morn

The Twilight Country. 67

We marched in slow procession,
shaded

And walled by miles of elm and pine.
As noon drew near the shading leaves
Became less dense, the tree-wall
thinned;

The road took on an upward slope;
And all the band grew silent: youths
And maidens,—elders,—children,—
all!

Ere I could voice my questioning
Surprise, a near companion spoke:
“Brother, calm thy soul! Prepare for
wondrous things!

Beyond the brow of yon low-lying hill
A nameless glory waits thy ears and eyes;
And love prepares for thee a pleasant
doom.

The just and great Judge ponders on thy
worth,
Takes council with thy wishes and thy
strength;
And, as we journey, formulates thy judgment.”

We touched the summit of the hill.—

Oh! how shall I sing of it!
Splendor unspeakable!
Valley of em'rald fire!
City of molten gold!
River of diamond light!
Mountains of thawless ice!
Sun pouring over all
Radiant cataracts!
Splendor unspeakable!
How shall I sing of it!

Lying beneath us a valley,
Smooth as the rain-beaten water,
Green with the grasses of springtime,
Stretched to the snowy-robed mountains

Guarding the unknown west.

And forth from their caverns the river—
With heavy majestic movement,
With diamond wavelets rippled,
And rocking the sun on its bosom—

Emptied, and curved down the valley,
To vanish at last thru a cleft in the crescent of
hilltops

Rimming the em'rald vale.
And set in the center a city,
More splendid than singer may sing of,

The Twilight Country.

69

More white than the snows of the summits,
More golden than fires of the morning,
Shone like a builded dream.

Of marble unstained were its palace and rampart walls.

Of virginal gold was its crown of cathedral spires,

And the million minarets
That bejeweled its foam-white brow.

In the raining rays of noon
It appeared a froth of white,
And a mist of golden fire.

And down from the crescent of hilltops
Pilgrims in bands of ten thousand
Poured like a flood-burst of lilies,—
Poured o'er the valley beneath us
Into the gates of the city.

And like them we slowly descended,
With the fragrance of trodden flowers
And the music of many voices.

With singing and waving of branches
We entered the vale of love,
The valley of labor and love,—

We paused—all pilgrims paused—the sun attained high noon—

The gates fell back—and then—

To the boom of a brazen bell,
To the ever-increasing swell
Of the city's noon-tide chime,
To the pulsing ocean tone
Of an hundred organs blown
In triumphant marshal time,
To a pæan loud and long,
To a thunder-burst of song,
We entered the great sun city!

Once I had passed within the gates, my friends,
Excepting one who stayed to pilot me
Among the city's wonders, bade me brief
Farewell till we should meet again before
The Judgment Seat. Then he who yet re-
mained

Led me into the avenues of commerce,
Where skilful craftsmen labor without toil,
And noiseless engines shape materials
Of use and ornament for all the land.
We saw the men at work. We visited
Their homes; and everywhere found labor
joined
With love and beauty. Wonder-struck I
watched

Gigantic forms attain convulsive birth
Upon the pressure of a hand unable
To loose a bolt from that it had created.
Had not my comrade led me off I fear
I should have staid forever by the workmen;
So strangely fascinating were their tasks.
On leaving them we crossed the river to
That portion of the city dedicate
To culture and authority. My friend
Now led me into schools where youths are
trained

In all that fits the man for joy in life,
And maidens learn the art of womanhood
We heard the poet's lay, the singer's song
We mingled freely with the lofty souled;
And bowed our heads in chapels fragrant with
Devotion. Passing down the avenues
We saw what seemed a mass of splendor. Pile
On pile of gold-topped marble rose before us
In ever magnified magnificence,
Till near the river's brink, encircled by
A chain of palaces and parked mid elms,
Appeared the city's grandest monument
And symbol of authority—a dome
Surrounded by a coronet of towers.
From him who walked with me I learned it was

The Judgment Hall, whose circling palaces
Maintained in state the country's peers and
princes.

With something kin to sadness I inquired
What need there was of princes in a land
Where all were one in loving brotherhood.
At which my comrade smiled, and made reply:

“ Brothers are we all; yet nature bids us
give

To those we choose as guardians of our
state,

To those whose great achievements widen
life,

That reverence and honor due to worth—

The honor of acknowledged nobleness.

We have no slaves; so 'tis no shame to call
A brother, Prince. The gift bespeaks the
giver.”

These words were scarcely spoken ere we
reached

The Judgment Hall. We entered, passed amid
A wilderness of columns, galleries

And clustered rooms until we stood beneath

The heaven-filling dome. Before me rose

The Judgment Seat. Thereon I saw a man

Not yet advanced in years. About his brow

He wore an iron circlet, wreathed with laurel,
And in the front surmounted by a cross
Of gold—the threefold symbol of his power,
And of its source in culture, love and labor.
A robe of silk thick-strewn with opal, pearl
And ruby, graced his God-like form. His locks
Hung loose. His mien was free. And in his
face

The whirlwind, heat and thunder seemed to
sleep.

My presence spying soon amongst the throng
That crowded round his seat, he called me forth
To hear my judgment. Words of love he
spake:

“Son, thy own desires have judged thee. Do
thou that

Which gives thee happiness and blesseth all.
Beyond the city, toward the west, thou’lt find
Thy home. Go there! With labor make the
earth

Yield thee a plenteous harvest. Reap the joy
That springs of love-sown seed. Live near to
God;

And let thy soul be filled with nature’s mean-
ing!”

I turned to go, uncertain what my task

Might be, when from the multitude stepped
forth

A maid more lovely than the waking spring—

The maiden on earth long
sought,

The maiden my dreams had
brought,

The maid that the morning had taken
away,

The fair one of fancy unknown of the
day.

In her eyes was the night sky's heavy blue ;
In her hair was the night air's nameless
hue ;

And her body the soul of an angel arrayed.

I clasped her ; I prayed,

With spirit afraid,

No more to depart,

Not again to unloosen the strings of my
heart.

The maiden's answer soothed my ev'ry pain :—

“ Love, most patiently I've waited thee ;
and day

By day I've labored, making sweet the
home

That soon should house our bonded souls.

We are

For one another, love; and here, where all
Good comes to pass, we'll realize that joy
Which in the world could only be a dream.

In quiet ecstasy our souls shall journey."

In echo of her words a happy murmur

Thrilled thru the multitude. Upon the face

Of him who held the Judgment Seat a smile

Appeared which blessed us with its radiance.

We knelt before our Judge, and from his hands

Received: my love a lily, I a staff

Of gold. Then arm in arm we left the hall,

While men and maidens sang, and children cast

Rare flowers in our path. A glad procession

Accomp'nied us into the river's brink,

Where rode the bridal barge—a boat of silver

Wrought o'er with many legends pleasing to

The lover's eye, luxurious with velvets

And silks that trailed in snowy folds upon

The water, wreathed with pearls and roses

white,

And moved by hidden power to soft slow music.

As we sailed from the city ev'ning fell.

The stars by little groups appeared in heaven.

Above the eastern hills the full moon rose.

And far away we heard the children sing:

Life to its fullness

Ripens thru love.

Hillside and meadow,

Forest and fallow,

Lit or with shadow,

Flourish in love.

Star-sea and ocean

Move with emotion,

Bonded in love.

Birdlet and flower,

Things of an hour,

Beings of power,

Live but for love.

Clasp then with kisses,

Maiden and man!

Gather the blisses

Held in life's span!

Seek the eternal

Thru the diurnal.

Make thy days vernal

Ever with love.

Life doth ordain thee,

God shall retain thee,

Pilgrims of love.

God the all-being,

God the all-feeling,
 Fills all with meaning,
 Fills thee with love,
 Makes life to fulness
 Ripen thru love.

We lived a quiet life, we two with nature.
 Together often we would labor; I
 Among the fields where grain grew green and
 golden,
 And she within our villa garden, teaching
 The rose to twine about the marble walls,
 Or caring for the animals who shared
 Our life. Some days we labored not, but spent
 The hours in explorations into wilds
 Of wood and stream. Oft we would visit those
 We knew in other regions of this Twilight
 Country,
 Passing with them an hour in pleasant converse,
 Or mingling in their bloodless sports. Some-
 times
 Indeed we sought the pleasures of the city
 Whose culture and imperial splendor seemed
 To bind us closer to that brotherhood
 Of which we were a part. Our greatest joy
 We found, however, when, at nightfall as

The nightingales collected in our garden,
My love and I sat hand in hand together.
Then we would gaze upon the stars with
thoughts

Of what unfathomed possibilities
The ocean of the infinite engulfed.
And in our souls we felt the touch of that
Deep yearning which is God, that nameless love
Which binds star unto star and soul to soul.
These precious hours we seldom marred with
speech ;

But oft my love would strike her harp and we,
In wordless song, would blend our voices with
The soaring treble of the nightingales.
Sometimes, about the middle hour of darkness,
I would awake. Then might I see, pass up
The river, shrouded, silent, pilgrim figures,
With heads bent low, with arms laid crosswise
on

Their breasts, and all ensphered in mists of
mild

And moony radiance. I saw them pass
Into the cañon whence the river issued ;
And saw them then no more. One night a
sound,

As of a major harmony struck deep

By all earth's organs blown in unison,
Unclosed my lids. Above the mountain wall
A crimson billow mounted high. Forth from
The cañon sped an armed messenger,
In silver clad, white-winged, deep-eyed, and
 sphered
In opalescent fire. His piercing glance
Awoke the Twilight Country to commotion.—

'Twas many moments ere I realized
That all had been a dream, that what I now
Beheld was but a red reflection of
The sunrise on the windows of the city—
The Earthly city. Saddened by this waking,
I sought the garden. Nature there was glad:
 Glad with the dews of the morning,
 Glad with the songs of the west wind,
 Glad with the breath of the lilac,
 Glad with the voice of the robin,
 Glad with the gladness of living.
Happiness came to me likewise.
Peace and a thought of the meaning
Hidden in visions of dreamland,
Came like a light to my spirit,
Came with the rays of the morning.
I questioned now no more; but spake:

“Earth, to-day thou art as yesterday; but
then

I knew thee not. Thou wast to me an orb
Of woe where tears corroded ev’ry joy,
And men found labor, toil. ’Tis true thou
hast

Thy pains; but love and brotherhood-de-
sires

Thou hast as well, and fellowship with
God.

Thy sorrows are but steps in upward prog-
ress.”

When I had done far voices seemed to sing:—

Seek the eternal

Thru the diurnal.

Make thy days vernal

Ever with love.

Life doth ordain thee,

God shall retain thee,

Pilgrim of love.

God the all-being,

God the all-feeling,

Fills all with meaning,

Fills thee with love,

Makes life to fulness

Ripen thru love.

Part III.

Satires.

SATIRES.

1.

The Tourist Speaks.

A TOURIST?—Yes, and late returned from
Hell;

A place not such as we have heard them tell
About in pulpits; but a pleasant land
Of cities, where the people understand
What's most enjoyable and safest too,
Which thing they strive with all their souls to
do.

Each man is free to be the beast he feels;
And no one marks it if he buys or steals.
If he so wills, he works, if not, he lazes;
Tends his estate, or lets it go to blazes.
It matters not in Hell. Each makes his wish;
But, when 'tis made, he must abide the dish.
No one can taste of this, and sample that,
And then take both; he can't choose lean and
fat.

Whate'er a man would, that he is, no more;
Success goes ever thru a single door.

A true democracy is Hell, where small
And great unite, and tramps are peers of all,
Where men of means control the people's lives,
Where all things have their price, and business
thrives

By knavery, where a pauper woman's free
To be her worst;—a true democracy,
With harlots, swindlers, aldermen and drink,
With tenements and streets that teem and stink,
And ev'ry civilized convenience. Think
Of this, and tell me how a man can bear
To languish here when he might glory there.
What would I not give now to be in Hell!
'Tis gala night; and ev'ry town will smell
Of flowers, fireworks and flowing beer;
A hundred brass-band tunes will itch the ear;
Mephistopheles will speak; and crowds will
cheer.

Oh! What a thing to long for! What a sight!
To see the city of perpetual night,
Where ev'ry other building's a saloon,
And where one's pleasure's always at high
noon;

A fine chance too to study human nature

For here assembles ev'ry type of creature :
The man who sneezes when you say 'tis cold,
The dupe who's never happy till he's sold,
The honest clergyman predicting grace,
The politician looking for a place,
The doctor with his uncollected bills,
The lawyer who would skin the calf he kills,
The poet who forsakes gold for a rhyme,
The adolescent barking at his time,
The walking, dull quotation of the styles,
The laughing miss, and she who only smiles.
These you could study till your head was weary.
Then you might tipple till your eyes were
 bleary ;

And in some side saloon—whose earthly smell
Of vile tobacco makes the bosom swell—
You might enjoy the full of Hell's true free-
 dom.

Indeed, tho they have rules, you may not heed
 'em ;

But honor the conventionalities
You must ; else you will lose society's
Regard.—But I digress !—If you should visit
The land I mention, be the true exquisite.
Get drunk ; and bet upon th' infernal race ;

• And fall in love with some enameled face.
Then you will swear that Hell's a pleasant
place;
Surely not one where you would take your wife;
But, all things judged, the best for future life.

2.

The Crocodile Soliloquizes.

A PICKANINNY clambered down the beach,
And sat upon the sand, just out of reach
Of brother Crocodile, who looked with sad
And hungry eyes upon the little lad.
Then, since he could not ope his jaws with
profit,
He oped his heart, and spake what fools may
scoff at:

Unhappy child of an unhappy race—
Destined by heaven to fill a freeman's place,
But by thy paler brother made to slave,
Or, worse, to take the part and name of knave—
What miseries, what toiling shames await
Thee! Well it is the child knows not its fate.
Once did thy people boast a fatherland,
Where none but savage princes could command.
'Twas so for years until the trav'ler came
To beg admittance. Little was his shame;
For hospitality made him grow bold;

And he decamped with ivory, gems and gold.
Then came the missionary, even worse.
The trav'ler was a nuisance, he a curse;
But ye were wise enough to start a fracas
In which God got his soul, and th' pot his ear
cass.

Then came the civilizing power of rum,
Which changed the savage warrior to a bum.
Then came the slave gang, plundering at will.
They took ye where ye live and suffer still
For many years ye bore the galling yoke
Of slav'ry, till a civil struggle broke
The chains. A few amendments followed soon,
Which civilized the nigger to a coon,
And gave ye the divine and holy right
To cast a ballot ere ye knew the light
From dark. This privilege is not for use
Howe'er. 'Tis better left to white abuse.
Unhappy child! ye know not of the pains
That wait at manhood's door; far worse than
chains,

Far worse than ignorance in savage lands,
Far worse than working daily with bare hands.
Ye may not climb to higher rank than porter;
Nor dare ye hope to wed a good white's daugh-
ter,

Ye may not study in the best of schools ;
And must be humble e'en before the fools.
For thee real justice is a far-off hope.
At present ye transgress, and stretch a rope.
But wait, and hold thy ballot-priv'lege tight ;
For that, and that alone, doth give thee right
Unto the name of freeman. All are equal
As long as all can vote ; so let the sequel
Of th' struggle twixt the negroes and the whites
Be triumph for unhampered ballot rights.

So spake the crocodile ; while with much grace
A sympathetic tear-drop coursed his face.
He wept for the down-trodden negro race.

3.

The Interludes of the Orchestra.

A THEME WITH VARIATIONS AND INTERRUPTIONS.

*" I used to take great delight in noticing.**The habits, tricks and physiognomy of Asses."*WORDSWORTH. (Note to "*Peter Bell*."

INTRODUCTION.

MY theme shall be an ev'ning spent with fools,
 In most correct regard to social rules;
 An ev'ning graced by music, beauty, wit,
 And no more scandal than the world deems fit.
 Of gowns I'd sing, and maids divinely fair,
 Of dudes with pimpled heads and faultless
 hair,
 Of queens of mode and portly cattle kings
 Whose regal power from legal knav'ry springs,
 Of that beau monde where truth has never
 strayed,

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 93

Where honesty is hid and wealth displayed :
Of all this, Muse, inspire my soul to sing ;
Nor let my fancy faint upon the wing.
If noble thought should e'er break into storm,
And, swelled with thunder, burst the proper
 form,
Lead, Goddess ! lead me back to sense again,
And place me safely on the lower plain,
Where, bounded by the flawless form of Pope,*
My wit unsouled with little themes may cope.

INTERLUDE 1.

But now to th' point ! My tale must still pro-
 gress,
Howe'er my pen may falter or digress.—
Miss Maud McBride and I arrived in state,
And, as the code decrees, a little late.
The theater was full with odors, dust and light.
Three thousand color-contrasts pained the
 sight.

* Alexander Pope : an English poet of the eighteenth century who wrote many excellent poems in the above style. His works are rich in epigrams, maxims and pert sayings.

A symphony by Brahms attacked our ears
With wailings that had drawn a pump to tears.
An orotundity of noise it seemed,
Such as an academie might have dreamed.
And something more appeared which I must
name—

Tho I'd give 't more of pity than of fame.—
Elite society was there in force:
The plain, the groomed, the spangled and the
coarse,
Most millionaires, an alderman or two,
Some clericals, and here and there a Jew.
So I observed as with the poorer race,
The lesser gods of earth, I took my place.
“Ye heavens be thanked!” I cried, “I'm not
of these!”
At which remark my spirit felt at ease.—

And here the piece came belching to a close;
And from the pit a fearful noise arose,
Which told the music had been understood,
That style had judged, and now pronounced it
good.
Such fierce applause might prove the mob
adored,
Did not their faces say that they were bored,

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 95

And 'tis not strange. What art can people
 know,
Whose whole ambition is to be a show?
What throbbing song could move to passion's
 sighs
Yon painted maid with belladonna eyes?
What heart-felt truth could ever touch a prude?
Or thought excite the head-piece of a dude?—

Yet stay! Once more the instruments begin;
A sick piano madly rattling in
To smother melody in senseless frills,
And murder music with a thousand trills.
Now well for those who love the over-dressed!
Now are the cultured list'ners truly blessed!
No subtle thought can now invade the mind,
Nor deep emotion leave its scar behind.
But why speak so on platitudes of noise?
'Twere best to leave the people to their choice.
Small good is gained by over-zealous hate;
And noble angers tempt the bolts of fate.
The men wise in the wisdom of the world
Are never to a rash destruction hurled.
They are not first to recognize a fault;
And only join when multitudes cry, halt.
So would I do, this once, the proper thing;

Flying from earth with not too free a wing.
Change, therefore, Goddess! change my rage to
spite.

Give me most strength when I am least i' the
right.

Content me with a vulgar theme; of men
In social guise to sing move thou my pen.—

The orgy's done; the public satisfied;
And ev'ry lofty aim of art denied.
Turn we, therefore, our judgment's burning
jet

And those who listen with a lorgnette.
Regard the prized men, priced maids, one and
all!

How groomed each seems within his curtained
stall!

Yon tender nymph arrayed in dairy blue,
Hear how she speaks on music old and new.
The program notes for her are not in vain;
Each fly-speck on the staff she can explain.
I watched the maid a moment past. Her
thought

Seemed cognizant of all that art had taught.
The contrapuntal maze to her was plain,
When we but felt confusion of the brain.

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 97

Her feeling followed when the tempest rose.
She sighed whene'er it settled to repose.
She dreamed of shepherd loves when hautboys
squawked;

And thru the trumpet's blare her hero stalked.
But when the moment came that she must weep,
The fair nymph lost her cue and fell asleep.
Oh! what a fall! An angel fall'n from grace!
Dear Goddess, cast a darkness o'er the place!
Let mortal eyes gaze not upon the scene!
From vulgar view, ye pow'rs her failing screen!
But hold! Not yet! Praise to the tuneful
God!

The maiden wakes in season to applaud.
'Tis now her chance—so moderns show their
loves—

To flutter, arch her back, and burst her gloves.
Nor does her flattering passion quite subside,
Till full a dozen bows have been supplied
By him of pianacrobatie fame;
Nor till the God has fanned th' expiring flame
With further tuneful zephyrs. Then adieu
To clown, to ancient maid and parvenu,
Tolarsdedgentry, flashy flathead beaux,
And all the tame apes of the social show.
The baton's raised; the last late whisper dies;

And Beethov'n's * " Marche Funèbre " assaults
the skies :

Thunder ! The muffled thunder of woe,
And the redounding rear of oceans surging
in sorrow !

No little God now wakes the strings.

No petty grief now shakes its wings.
This is no mother's, widow's, brother's wail
for a human dead ;

But a tearless sob for the living sorrow—

The flutter of ebon cloud-wings,

The suppressed, deep-throated, abysmal
music of a people's pain.

'Tis the funeral cry of those who labor in
bondage.

'Tis the funeral knell of those who wage war
wrongly.

'Tis the funeral sob of those who mourn for
soul-darkness.

* Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827) : a German musical composer highly esteemed in his own day, and still considered by some to be the greatest of composers. His music is not, however, as popular with the majority of the musically inclined as the less technical and complicated, but more soothing and heartfelt, melodies of the American ballad writers.

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 99

'Tis a question,—a warning,—a world-voice,—

A sound in an era of silence.—

The march is ended. Wonder holds the
fools—

But not for long—in silence on their stools.

They must applaud to let their neighbors know,
By outward sign, their souls are touched with
woe.

Like these Maud also felt the shock. Surprise
And timid wonder mingled in her eyes.

Half-questioning she turned, my glance to
meet;

But stopped off short, and, smiling, lisped:
“How sweet!”

Who hunts for pearls on land small treasure
finds;

So he who seeks for thought in little minds.

Oh, Maud! those blended tones are more than
sound;

And should have in thy soul an echo found.

Small is thy mind indeed, and hope is vain,

If thou canst face unmoved a Godlike pain!

Art thou like those who only seem at ease,

Resigned to music as a dog to fleas?

L. of C.

Or dost thou fear to break the social code;
And trust thy mind to aught beside the mode?
Perhaps, like many round, thou hast a mind?
A soul, perhaps, but one conventions bind?
Perhaps thou'rt still in custom too well housed
To be by any passion-tempest roused?—
No matter! Let it rest! We'll go below,
And join the promenade, and view the show.

INTERMEZZO PROMENADO.

Since modesty's advent in fig-leaf days,
And th' crude beginning of our social ways,
Since father Adam learned to be ashamed,
And woman for all evils first was blamed,
Since man resigned his tail and hairy vest,
When has he been, than now, more vilely
dressed?

A dull commercial uniformity
Prevails to make for staid deformity,
And one great harmony of platitudes
Where no discording beauty e'er intrudes.
Yet this should be no evil to enroll,
Were not the form the shadow of the soul.
A stupid dress, more than the printed page,
Reveals society and damns an age.

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 101

So our dull age is damned beyond reprieve;
And damned still more because we leave
Whate'er of truth to social life belongs,
And cling but to its husks and to its wrongs.
A man puts on, then thinks about, his clothes;
And that is all the creature does or knows.

“Enough!” your better nature cries. “You
 curse
Your kind. If man is bad you paint him
 worse.”

No! gentle soul, my painting's heavy lined;
But true. I draw naught other than I find;
Not th' best of men, remember, but the boast
Of nations—those we serve and honor most.
What is society? Who are these gods,
That we, with rev'rend hands, must touch their
 frauds?

Their sins, forsooth, we are forbade to touch
This priv'lege is for angels e'en too much.
Who are they?—Matrons old in scandal,
 knaves,

And moneyed eunuchs fat as harem slaves,
Divines and honest lawyers—holy scamps,
Aristocrats of straight descent from tramps,
Sweet buds whose highest labor is to flirt,

And dudes who'd die to peep beneath a skirt.
These are the lords! These make society!
These are the beings I would have you see!
Suppose we view and judge them as they pass;
A few well judged will answer for the mass.

The first you see before you, her in gray
And silver ev'ning dress,—“full dress,” some
say,—

Is queen this season of the higher caste,
In social law the first appeal and last.
A perfect type is she of the lady swell—
That individual called the reigning belle—
A nude in clothes, a mass of pads and pins,
A being half frivolities, half sins;
Small sins, indeed, which would a lesser shame,
But which, in her, convention dares not blame.
She does, perchance, take kisses on the sly,
Abuse her friends, and slander those not nigh.
But what of this? The nobler made do worse.
Frivolities, not sins, the world must curse;
And many such she has. First born is pride—
The lep'rous mother of all ills beside—
A vulgar pride, not sprung of lovely deeds,
But such as new-acquired money breeds.
She feels she has the right to sovereign sway,

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 103

To take the world's choice fruits and nothing
pay;

And holds herself a being better made
Than those who are of labor not afraid.

Her next frivolity is giving alms.

'Tis done, perchance, to sooth some conscience-
qualms.

From daily thousands which her husband steals
She doles a Sunday penny, giving meals
To mortals whom her idle splendor robs
Of warmth and light and love. So passion
throbs

In high-caste hearts; and self-idolatry
Degrades the heavenly name of charity.
So live we on in purse-proud money-lust,
Till angels sad and devils in disgust
Erase the word which Galilee first breathed
Sweetly o'er earth to comfort the bereaved,*
Till we are damned and charity as well
And penny givers ruled from heaven and hell.
The next of note in this imperial train

* In the original manuscript these couplets read as
following :—

“Erase the word which Galilee first breathed
On earth a full-bloom rose a sign perceived
By those who sail life's sea, to whom 't doth prove
A beacon fire which guides to shores of love.”

Is he bedecked in spangled fob and chain-
A peer ennobled from the pauper dregs;
Rag peddler once, now wholesale prince of eggs.
His sov'reignty none dare dispute. Who'll try,
When eggs to ancient priv'lege testify?
'Twere ignorance to scorn so great a man,
When th' sneers might strike the evolution plan,
'Gainst which no critic should be found at war,
However much the result he may deplore.
The system's dead that made mean man an act
Of grace, a sep'rate God-created fact;
And science holds—who's now the thought na-
bob—
That man was made, but 'twas a monkey's job.
And I, for one, hold firmly to this creed,
Tho 't throw discredit on the tail-tagged breed.
But here I stray. Let us return to him
We left, and find in what egregious whim
Dame Fortune placed his seat so lordly high;
How he escaped his patrimonial sty.
From rags he rose to pork, became a power
And made a million in a trembling hour.
A lucky coup in eggs five fortunes caught,
And complete ruin to his rivals brought.
Then railroad stocks and national bonds were
played

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 105`

Into his hands, and there securely stayed.
Franchises, bought for pence, he sold for
pounds.

Defrauding cities, he established towns.
And so progressed, till now, despite of cares,
His back a hundred million safely bears.
Yet all this while has scandal not been mute.
Dark rumors rise—unproved—which none
refute.

These tell of underhanded business schemes
And cut-throat legal deeds—the usual themes
Of gossip, not without foundation here,
Nor yet unnoticed by the public ear.
Some say a jail was once his place of state;
Some that he kept a mistress, but of late
Discharged for one whose husband will con-
nive

At th' sharing, so his business int'rest thrive.
Not much is our egg-crested prince above
The common tribe who squeeze and shove
Thru life's soiled, sordid, and devouring lane,
And by small hateful crimes their ends attain.
No culture leaves its stamp upon his face.
Naught manly marks him for a lofty place.
None love him; and, tho' few respect his work,
His word outweighs the firman of the Turk.

Some would excuse him and his past. They
say
That what he cannot spend he gives away.
'Tis true. He gives to charities and schools;
Builds homes for cripples and provides for
fools;
And, doing so, is numbered 'mong the blest.
Enough of him! Turn we now toward the rest.

That proud fat female and her slimmer half—
A new combine of butcheress and calf—
I'd pass in silence. No one living dares
To probe too deeply into his affairs;
And 't ill betides him who assaults her name
With anecdotes or words of evil fame.
What's more, she's now engaged in tearing down
Some reputations of unstained renown.
She loudly judges those she would invite
To grace her ball, betraying fear and spite.
Unto her friends, but for the world, she speaks;
So into eager ears the venom leaks
But let nor envy nor satiric hate
Arrest our steps. Shun we the noble state.
The humble and contented life be ours,
Where simple glory paves the path with flowers.

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 107

Ah! there is one we may regard with joy,
That pup-faced youth with whom the ladies toy.
He has nor brains nor beauty nor renown,
Is very much a sport and more a clown;
Yet women in his gallantries rejoice,
While men adjust their dress to suit his choice.
His manners are of impudent degree.
His wit is small; his humor rather free.
He leads cotillions with a passing grace;
Presents to decency a brazen face;
Is confidant and counselor at large
In all female affairs; and guides the barge
Of love safely thru ev'ry narrow strait;—
He's front door agent for the social great.
“But how?” you ask, “how came he to this
place?”
What sycophantic power won his race?”
Kind friend, he could amuse society.
This gift gave him superiority,
Where others would have earned the name of
ass;—
The length of ear's not all that marks that class.
Others have shamed the ape and bent the knee;
But few have played their part as well as he.
Who could so dress himself in woman's clothes
And woman's ways as he whene'er he chose?

Who else but he could wear upon his arm
A lady's garter, and escape all harm?
Who could at noon parade the public street,
And to a rag doll chatter, and repeat
A mother's childish prattle? Who, outside
An idiot's cell, could do 't and keep intact his
hide?

We must concede that he's a genius fine
As we who stumble o'er a sounding line;
Or madly search for words to rime with love,
Which we must match at th' end with "downy
dove";

Or build a swelling epigram on life,
To prove that "all is war"—"a ceaseless
strife."

Yea! by the gods! this hero justly shines
Above all poetasters and divines,
Above all scholars, statesmen, men of wit,
Above the goodly, and beyond the fit.
He shines because his brass reflects the light,
And pales not even in the densest night.
Nor works he with his hands nor with his head;
Yet cake he has when others want for bread.
He plays the buffoon to a weary few
Who would excite their pleasure sense anew,

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 109

Who find that taste has gone, and love grown
tame—

A local irritation and a name.

Decadent energies and careless will,

O'er-feasted pleasures and, more awful still,

No sense of trust makes life to these seem bare

And empty hours re-echo with despair.

Most gladly will they pay some one to ease

The minutes by, to find new ways to please

Their appetites, and spice anew their old

Desires. Such will they court and show'r with
gold.

Such is this pup-faced youth whom dandies
praise

And pay and to a lord's position raise,

And whom the world—despite his moral limp—

Must crown in honor Social King and—Pimp.

“Oh! Maud,” I said with honest pride and
scorn—

For I am by no little envies torn—

“Although it figures small and 's soon forgot,

I'd rather be a Count that counted not—

A no-account of unpronounced name—

Than be a Prince of beer or pumpkin fame.

The Count may steal at least a glance behind,

And in the past some splendid record find;
But he of cash may look not fore nor back,
Lest of all virtues he shall find a lack."
But you will say: "Why give such thoughts a
name?

With all caste rulings are not men the same
Wear we not clothes to hide our homely ills?
Use we not perfume 'cause a stink it kills?
Act we not so we may be counted great?
Do petty triumphs not the mind elate?
Keep we not silent to be named as wise?
Tell we the truth when profit calls for lies?
Have we not Thursday acts and Sunday talk?
When we can ride another do we walk?
Are we not modest in our neighbor's praise?
Look we not that the law he well obeys?"
Yea! trite philosopher, we're built alike.
Each has his virtues which the rest dislike.
Each has his ill. At ev'ry door fate knocks,
To give the poor their lice, the rich their pox.
"'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true,"
Immortal William* said. And I say too:

* William Shakespeare (1564-1615); the talented author of "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King Lear," and other notheworthy plays which are at present occasionally and badly acted.

The Interludes of the Orchestra. III

One touch of nature makes the world a sty;
A little culture lifts the nostril high.—
“Come, Maud; The bell has rung. The
 music starts.
To linger is to miss the better parts.”

INTERLUDE 2.

We two had barely reached our seats before
The orchestra began to snort and snore
Thru some convulsion of a modern kind,
Supposed to show what thoughts a drunken
 mind
Will have upon th’ eternal mystery,
When ev’ry household nuisance is set free.
Amid the crash and cry of pots and pans,
Of trampled pups, night cats and flying cans,
The hero’s bassoon voice rang madly clear,
To question why life’s truth did not appear.
The poem* ended in a roar of brass,
Which proved the poet’s Pegasus an ass.
Then ev’ry soul was softened by a song
Of maiden beauty, yet serenely strong,
A melody unmarred by morbid faults—
Von Weber’s “Invitation to the Waltz”:

* Such pieces are designated “TONE-POEMS.”

Clasp hands now, youth and maiden;
 Clasp hands forgetting fears.
To-day ye live in Eden;
 To-morrow gathers tears.
Think nothing of hereafter;
 But dance while dance ye may.
This the hour for laughter.
 Sad thoughts shall have their day.
 Sweet thoughts will pass away.
 Then must ye pause and pray.

 Feel the wild warm thrill
Of circling with breast against breast!
 All thy being fill
 With delicious unrest!
 Feel the pulse mount high
With heat of a passionate fire!
 Loose the long soft sigh
 Of unuttered desire!

For this is the moment ye measure
The soul by the depth of its pleasure.
This moment makes madness thy treasure.

 Feel the wild warm thrill

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 113

Of circling with breast against breast!
All thy being fill
With delicious unrest!

Feel the gentle rhythmic motion,
Rising,—falling,—
Like the round waves of the ocean!
Hear the flutes and cellos calling,—
Calling,—calling,—
Softly calling
Like far tree-tops in commotion,—
Calling to the dance!—

Unclasp now, youth and maiden.
Unclasp; the waltz is done.
Brief was thy life in Eden;
At end ere half begun;
But are ye not the better for the dance?

Such was my revery as strain by strain
The waltz progressed. Then came the closing
pain,
The early mad-house rush for cabs and cars,
The one vulgarity that always mars
The pleasure of a concert, op'ra, play,
But let none bring complaint. It is our way.

Sometime, not far ahead, we'll understand
That ev'ry orchestra is not a band,
That melody is not the same as tune,
That music's muse is not a rag-time coon,
That art is consecration, not a toy
For grown and favored children to enjoy.
Sometime we'll learn the rudiments of art.
Then will the Yankee play a cultured part.—
Well, Maud and I, like others, rose to go;
And soon with them stood ankle-deep in th'

snow

That swept in sheets and drifting eddies o'er
The walk, and piled against the op'ra door.
Half frozen were we ere our hired cab
Came round. The very star beams seemed to
stab

Like blades of ice; so bitter was the night.
Against its cold the thickest wraps seemed
slight.

Not even slippered elegance was warm.
With all its furs and gems, it had no charm
To change Boreas' impartiality.
The spiteful God bit all with equal glee.
With outward frets and many inward oaths
I felt the crystals gather on my nose,
As I stood for my cab to come around,

The Interludes of the Orchestra. 115

And prayed hell's fire to rise and thaw the
ground.

At this unholy time a beggar came
To us for help—a beggar drunk and lame.
With clashing teeth he told how he was strange
In town, and less the necessary change
To buy himself a supper or a bed,
Without which morn must surely find him dead.
To prove the point he showed his swollen throat
And th' bare and purple skin beneath his coat.
'Twas not, indeed, too clean; but then the
dirt

Was hardly equal to a woolen shirt.
Besides, in place of socks or shoes, he wore
Gum boots with holes. He said his feet were
sore.

'Tis possible he spoke the truth quite plain.
If so he'll never do the like again;
For this time truth received small recompense.
Some gave him coin; some good advice, the
sense

Of which was evident to them that gave,
And would have been to him were he no knave.
Some frowned his purpose down. Some looked
away.

A youthful millionaire was heard to say

He thought the world too poor to house the
shirk,

And only meant for those who live by work.

One belle, however, had a tender heart.

Perhaps it was to ease some conscience smart

She gave the widow's mite,—with such a tact

That God and I alone beheld the act.

Then came my turn. I was about to play

The giver when a cab whisked us away.

At th' swellest rest'rant, where the elite dine,

Miss Maud and I long lingered o'er our wine,

Discussing the four-hundred's weals and woes.

I scorned their empty heads. Maud praised
their clothes.

She sighed to think what comfort money breeds ;

And told her small desires, her larger needs.

“ No matter, Maud ! ” I cried. “ The day will
come

When we can have our parties, luncheons, days
at home,

Our yacht, our trip to Europe and a fame,

Perhaps, that will make envy speak our name.

Just wait a while until my verses pay.

We then can be as arrogant as they.”

Part III.

Redemption.

THERE comes a moment when sadness cloy's the
soul,
When tender music jars, when books are stale,
When friendship wanes and love's red pop-
pies pale,
When those warm wind-kissed passion waves
that roll
With rainbows o'er our dreams have sunk
to gray stagnation.

A moment comes when, like the sea-worn rock
Forsaken by the tide, the soul appears
Ingloriously naked, neither with tears
Nor smiles, no longer gladdened by the shock
Of fancy's harmony. Grotesque it seems
and loveless.

Then creep we to some idly-wooded glen
Where dripping branches swell a brook's soft
song

To many melodies, and robins throng,
And there in peaceful nature find again
That living calm which deepens sorrow
into joy.

Beside the Cataract.

SHE.

OH! loved one, I am sad to-night.
The cataract makes melancholy music to mine
ear.

I find no consolation in its song.

HE.

I too am sad this night, my love;
But there is music for me in the falling water's
moan.

From gazing in the heavens am I sad.

SHE.

For very emptiness I'd weep.

HE.

For very fullness would I sing.

SHE.

The mists obscure mine eyes, and pain me.

HE.

The distance maketh sore mine eyeballs.

SHE.

I am as one too much with sleep.

HE.

I am forever on the wing.

SHE.

My spirit may not fly.
It knoweth not the temper of the winds.

HE.

My spirit may not stop.
The waters of destruction roll beneath.

SHE.

Ambition moves me not.
'Tis but a word that hath a far-off sound.

HE.

Of all words, 'tis the sweetest to mine ear.
It nameth all my hopes.
Who hath ambition for a friend,
Is ne'er alone tho by all men forsaken.
Who hath ambition for a guide,
Is never lost tho in a trackless forest.
He is no wanderer
Who loseth not his star.

SHE.

Then would I know ambition.

HE.

'Tis comfort to the troubled.
It maketh pain seem slight;
And fear is vanquished in its sight.
'Tis order in unrest.

SHE.

Then would I have ambition.

HE.

But he who'd have must pay.

Ambition hath one price—

A life of sacrifice.

Who would attain must walk the way

That hath no turnings, no retreats.

If foe opposeth, foe must fall.

If friend resisteth, friend must go.

If people murmur, blood must flow.

If child recalleth, child must cry.

If love desisteth, love must die.

Ambition, from the great or small,

Brooks neither haltings nor defeats.

SHE.

Then would I not ambition.

Upon some lesser road I'd journey;

Upon some way where love

Might bear me company,

Where I might take my child,

Where I might have my friend,

Where I might aid the lame,

Where I might pause for rest

Unfearful of too sudden ending,

Unpunished by a star.

H.E.

Then know ye not ambition.

SHE.

Is it so sweet to taste completed life?

Is labor done so sweet?

H.E.

There's little happiness in having done.

'Tis happiness to do.

SHE.

What quickeneth ambition?

H.E.

A murmur of the sea,

A glitter of a star,

A moment's solitude

When doubt hath made a darkness in the soul,

When thought hath made a chaos in the mind.

Then speaketh God—

The God within the man;

And of the darkness comes a flame;

And of the chaos comes a word;

And once again is faith.

One purpose now is clear,

One labor to be done.

Then have ye found ambition!

SHE.

But of this faith I know not.

I have a faith that there is one
Who giveth all a meaning—
One master soul who guides the spheres
And holds the light'ning in his hands,
Who fills our hearts with love for one another,
And will not leave that love to perish ever.

HE.

How mean and meager is thy God!
A meddler in affairs of nature!
Where in the infinite is room
For such a being?
Where in the infinite is room
For two eternals?
No! love, there is but one;
And yonder cataract,
Yon sheet of foam and thunder
Is not his plaything.
Gaze in the sky at nightfall!
Gaze in the humble violet!
Gaze in thine own sweet spirit!
Ye then will find thy God;
For are ye not, all ye,
Like yon down-pouring water,
The parts, the organs of the all-embracing One?

SHE.

Ah love! what then is life?

What cometh after death?

HE.

Yon rainbow answers thee,

Yon rainbow in the mist.

We are but as the sep'rate drops

That, passing thru the color arch,

Gleam for a moment, then are gone.

The rainbow is eternally the same;

'Tis life—I call it God;

But You and I are momentary things.

As You and I We live no more.

We'll be again, as we have always been,

Within the rainbow, part of God;

But changed from You and I

SHE.

Your faith is beautiful;

Yet I'd not have it mine.

HE.

Your faith is comforting;

Yet never can be mine.

SHE.

'Tis strange; but I am now no longer sad.

Thy faith hath made me strong in mine.

The cataract makes pleasant music to mine ear.

HE.

I would not have it otherwise than so.

Thy distant hope shall comfort thee,
As my ambition makes me strong to live and
strive.

SHE.

But is there not a sadness always with thee?

HE.

No! love, 'tis rather sober joy than sadness.

SHE.

But have ye not some moments of despair?

HE.

Yes! While this summer yet was young
A moment's passion shook my faith.
I doubted then if I should find
More happiness in God's design;
Or in the humbler life of home
And wife and child with simple faith
And labor sep'rate from the soul.
Then came I to the cataract;
And held communion with its strength.
Here God and I sat hand in hand
The livelong night; and when the morn
Appeared I rose refreshed and strong
As some tired trav'ler who has slept.

Dramatic Studies.

DRAMATIC STUDIES.

1.

The Madman's Quest.

A MADMAN to the mountains came while Spring
Was yet releasing from their frozen folds
The forests. High he came; and far within;
And crawled to an out-leaping jut of rock;
And stood erect; and fixed his fevered eye
A moment on the feathered band of green
Beneath the cañon. Then he raised his hands,
And 'gainst the age-worn mountains hurled his
voice,

And 'gainst th' eternal silence:

“ Oh God ! ” he cried,
“ My soul hath sought thee long, and finds thee
not.

Since first I heard my mother's thin-drawn lips
In reverent pleading lift thy dreadful name,
I've sought thee. Wisdom's aid was mine.

She names,
But knows thee not. Her eyes behold the
heart's

Vain longing. This her voice proclaims as God.
Upon the highway of man's progress, sin
And sorrow have I vainly looked for thee.
There shouldst thou be if thou art, Lord!
Within my own unhappy soul I searched;
But the turbulent waters hid the depths thereof.
I had a friend who trod with me the ways
Of thought. I saw him drown. He prayed
for help;

And cursed the hand that moved not to his aid.
No help I gave; for from death's doorway I
Had hoped to hear some word of thee and that
Beyond. I could but laugh to see the lines
Of anguish scar his serene face, and to see
Him claw the fragile foam his lips had made.
He died unspeaking; and the bubbles that rose
Were naught but breath. It was not long ago
I held my dying babe in these shrunk arms,
And waited with my ear close-pressed against
Its lips. With her I loved the child was laid;
But all availed not. Oh God! a bitter search
Is mine. A barefoot journey over hot
And jagged rock I've made. And now I come
To the mountains. Mock my call, ye stones!
Ye pines

The Madman's Quest. 133

May laugh! But my pilgrimage has but just
begun.

I seek no more with men to find thee, Lord.
Deep in the rents of thy uneven earth I search,
And in the quiet of its waters——”

Remorse.

THEY will not think to search for me to-night.
Their vengeance is too slow. When they have
missed

His presence, I'll be where I cannot be
Pursued.—Who calls!—A raven. Bah! my
nerves

Are overwrought with travel. 'Tis unwise
To be so hasty in one's flight from ill.
That very haste discovers weakness. Years
Ago I should have schemed his taking off;
And quietly and by some slow disease
I should have caused his end. Instead I
suffered

His wretched tyranny to fill my days
And nights with bitter helpless rage and self
Accusings vain as schoolboy lawlessness.
The moment found me unprepared to play
A thoughtful part. Like some poor pasteboard
villain

I must strike, o'er-dung my deed, and flee.
 Enough of this! What's past is best forgot
 If all the blackness of the ages were held
 In mind, our children would go mad upon
 The mother's milk.—Who cries so loud?—Still,
 heart!

'Tis but the wind that trumpets the coming
 storm.

The warning suits me well. I'll seek a shelter
 In this hut until the storming cease;
 And then more calmly I'll resume my journey.
 Come, tempest! Fall, rain, and wash the past
 away!

Rage! Rage! Rage! Is there no end to wrath?
 Has blue gehenna loosed its fires against
 The world? Does heaven mean to deluge man
 In this o'erwhelming rain; or wash all murders
 Naked? This is a night when thunder makes
 The guilty soul afraid.—I see his corpse
 Before me now, pale, stiff, with ev'ry wound
 Agape, exposed to all suspecting eyes,
 With red rain wet.—Why did I draw his blood?
 I might have strangled him as easily.
 Then I had seen no crimson shadows on
 The wall, no bloody hands from vacant air

Had grasped me, flames had not appeared so
red,
Nor thunder smote my ear so fearfully.—
Oh! God of mercy, let me not go mad!

3.

Soliloquy in a Cell.

How cold it is! how damp! The stones start
from

The walls with moisture. Laughing beauty
slept

Never beneath this roof; or, sleeping, woke,
Religious woe. They say that he who lived
Here first did with a smile engraven die.

And often, as I kneel before his skull,
That smile seems printed on the bone. 'Tis
strange

What sport our features make of us. Of this
Man naught remains but that last touch which
closed

His chronicle—the ending flourish of
Life's quill. And I dare scarcely take the sun-
shine;

Lest from my shadow my deformity shall start,
And with a monkey's gesture mock me.—Lord,
Hadst thou seen fit to build my body straight
I might have stormed thy heaven with a sword,

And to the brazen sound of war and conquest;
Or might I of the soft-lipped kiss-tuned music
Of ladies' love have formed a paradise
On earth. Or had my mind been swelled with
what

My body lacks, I might in that have found
A consolation; and heaven's wealth of joy
Anticipated in the ecstasy
Of pregnant vision and solemn contemplation.
Had I been, not more, yet other than I am
I might have lived the people's life; their smiles
And tears I might have tasted. Now—a
priest—

I stand betwixt their God and them—a man
Apart from men, a reverend obstruction.
I can but beat the pavement with my knees;
And, like the dripping ceiling sweat, wear thru
The stone while time and death advance to
meet me.—

Ah! there's the bell. I must not be behind.
I would they let the children sing alone;
The men make but a stubborn harmony.

The Coward's Tragedy.

ASLEEP?—Can sinners sleep so calmly?—No!
I cannot sleep. The reflex of my fever
Consumes all peace. I fear to trust my dreams;
But she, the falser, slumbers like a babe.

No breath of pain escapes her pale thin lips.
No shameful red upon the brow attests
Her sorrow. Nothing but her flesh has life.
Why not then finish with her?—Now!—

'Twould be

A simple deed to bite that lithe neck where
It throbs, and let the blood ooze—Fool! she can
Not bleed. The wound might run with wine—
The last she drank before I forced the kiss
Withheld from me, before I stopped her playing.
She has no blood!—Come! come! what fool-
ishness

Is this I speak? The poisoned air has made
Me mad. Already round the dying lamp
My fancy sees a mist make strange contortions.
'Tis nothing! nothing but stale tobacco smoke.

The mist's without. The cold foul mist is thick
Without; and hides the shamefaced maiden
stars.

If only they might never shine again.
If only this pervading gloom might last;
But morn must come to mock the bitter soul;
And I must grasp the hand of him I've
wronged;

And smile and learn to call myself a liar.—
The day will soon begin. A few brief hours;
And she, who in the northern forest, dreams
Of her departed lover's farewell vow,
Will make to happy maiden meditation.
Perhaps, ere she begins the daily task,
A virgin prayer will rise to God for him
Who labors in the South.—She'll feel some pain
That I return not. She'll weep a little;
But when the news that I have failed comes
home,

Her love will freeze; and those who called me
friend

Will not recall my name. I shall be stranger
Than he who never saw a welcome smile,
Or never felt a hand grasp his in friendship.
Each day will see me sink in deeper shame.
That is my progress now. I may but add

The Coward's Tragedy. 141

One misery unto another, till,
In some dark stinking hole, I make
The sum complete, and end my coward life.—
Awake?—Yes! I am here. Unloose your hair,
My love; and bind me fast; and let me feel
Your warm soft skin against my own. You're
all
I have to live for. Let me feel you near!

5.

Alice.

THEY call me Alice, friend. It is the name,
The only name, I've borne from infancy.
I must have had a second once; for I
Remember well my mother and our home—
A wretched shack, and always damp with steam
From tubs of washing. Father must have died
When I was very young. I never knew him.
They say he was a mason—skilled, but given
To drink—and that one day while full he fell
And broke his neck. Then I was set to work.
My first position I received when eight
Years old. The work had not been hard, were
not
The hours of labor long; but these I learned
To shorten by judicious waste of time.
Soon also I became acquainted with
The other girls and boys who worked beside me.
They took me in their brotherhood, and showed
Me many kindnesses, and taught me much
About the world I'd never known before.
By twelve I was well versed in all the ways

Of men, and knew the best of methods to
Increase my slender wage. The poor learn
early!—

My mother's death about this time threw me
Upon my own resources. Fortune still
Befriended me, however, and, with what
I earned and what from some few friends I got,
I managed to support myself quite well.
Things thus progressed till one night late in
June,

When on my way from work, I met a sport
Whom I had seen some two, three times before.
As we went off together he proposed
I leave my present work and live with him.
He promised me employment in his office—
His father's, I should say—and many pleasures
That in the past had been beyond my reach.
I took his offer. Things went well. He gave
Me dresses, money, horses, all, in fact,
That one could ask for comfort or enjoyment.
I traveled, had my flowers, attended each
New play, and satisfied my ev'ry whim.
We had our quarrels as lovers will; but nothing
Of serious weight disturbed our happiness
For many months. But when a year had passed
I saw that he began to tire of me.

He often beat me. Once, when both of us
Were nearly crazed with drink, he kicked me in
The jaw and trampled on my chest. When I
Recovered from the fever that resulted,
My friend had gone with all he owned.—
Did I now hate him?—No! he had been kind.—
I think he's married now.—Well, to continue,
From that day on, for some three years, I lived
Upon the town. I went from place to place,
And got my living how I could. I tried,
Indeed, to make an honest livelihood;
But that was past my strength. You smile,
my friend?

You think my wish was weak? Perhaps you're
right.

But, be this as it may, you see me here.
My life has not been over strange. As you
Surmise, I find it often hard to live.
The man who runs this beer-hall lets me come
To ply my trade while I bring customers.
I pay a heavy fine and must besides
Bribe monthly the police. When I've done all,
And bought my clothes I've nothing left. My
path

Is hard; yet many go a harder way.—
Have I a lover?—Yes; that man you see

Four tables down. He's waiter here. We met
By chance when I was badly pressed. His help
Kept me from prison. Soon the moment came
When I, by nursing him thru sickness, could
Repay the favor. Since that time we've been
The best of friends. I help him how I can;
He listens to my troubles.—Marry? Pooh!
You're young, my friend. It takes our double
 earnings
To keep things going. As man and wife we
 could
Not earn enough to keep from want. Our hope
At present is that we can take a short
Vacation in the fall, a trip somewhere.
We may in time go on the stage.—Oh yes!
I've acted. In "The Fatal Kiss" I took
The rôle of "Maud," the injured country maid.
They say I did my part quite well.—Now
 friend,
You've heard my tale, suppose you buy more
 wine?

6.

Grandpa.

HUSH, baby! Grandpa watches always near.
He's careful of you. You're the only thing
He loves. The others drive him like a cur
From place to place, and take his money so
He can't buy medicine. But Grandpa's wise.
They think he don't use morphine any more.
Ha! ha! We two know better, don't we, baby?
Your mama said to-day: "Now father's cured
We can go out and leave the baby in
His charge." We'll show them, baby, we're no
fools.—

What! Crying? Why's the little one so sad?
And are the footlets cold? 'Twas grandpa took
The little shoes to buy his medicine.
They thought 'twas baby lost 'em. Never
mind!

We have a pleasure far exceeding theirs,
A pleasure compensating us for cold
Or any other pain. One drop will make

The snow turn red and run like fresh-spilled
blood.

The blue sky will be full of little hearts,
Of little crimson hearts with glow-worms in
The center of each one. And o'er the walls
Will crawl blue, green and golden coated
lizards.

From vacant corners fleshless things will speak
In bell-voiced monotone. The trees, the house,
The chairs and all things movable and fast
Will dance like leaves on kicksy-wicksy wave-
lets.

The wind will blow with sound of shivered
glass;

And we shall be so warm and light that we'll
Not know the bonds of flesh.—Come, baby, stop
Your crying!—One wee prick; and then there
is

No more of pain. Your Grandpa loves you so;
He makes the heavy sacrifice, and gives
You of his precious drops.—Now, baby, quiet!

7.

Despair.

ANOTHER absinthe, please!—I am not old
As you count age. In years I'm now just forty.
But if you reckon time according as
The soul has suffered, mine has been too long
A life. My early manhood was not diff'rent
From that of other well-kept boys. I had
All comforts and advantages, and money
Enough to make life easy. 'Twas toward
The closing of my college years I found
Myself. I then got interested in
The new psychology; worked at dreams,
Abnormal will, psychology of sex
And other allied subjects. Finally
I chose the last for research work. About
This time I also fell in love—a more
Important fact. You'd think that one who
knew
The workings of the sex instinct as well
As I then knew it would be proof against
Affections of the heart. However, I

Was bitten.—Yes; another of the same.
'Tis all I drink.—Lenore—'twas not her name,
But then 'twill do—Lenore and I were long
Acquainted ere I realized that she
Was more than friend to me. She loved me too,
In her queer way; but she was young, light-
hearted,
And wild—a healthy, joyous animal.
At that time I was full of heavy thoughts;
And her unbroken coltishness was like
A cordial to me. Time I hoped would change
Her waywardness to bright sobriety.
At last we were engaged; and I took ship
To study in the universities
Of Germany and France. I'll lightly touch
My three years' sojourn there; for my career
Was hardly more than ordinary. Wundt,
On one or two occasions, praised my work.
A monograph, some hundred pages, on
“Imagination and the Sex Instinct”
Brought me the notice of a few renowned
Psychologists, as well as some reviews.
I took my doctor's decently enough
To be congratulated. That was all.—
The first year of my stay abroad Lenore
And I sent weekly greetings. After that

The letters came less frequently; and soon
Stopped altogether. Try howe'er I would
I got no news of her. My letters came
To me unopened; and my friends informed
Me that Lenore had gone, they knew not where.
As soon as I had finished work I left
Berlin, to hunt for her so strangely lost;
But search was vain as letter-writing. All
I learned was that she had been married to
A diamond buyer, and had probably
Departed with him for Brazil. I asked
No more; but settled sadly down to work.
My love, but not my usefulness, was gone.
The world still gave me cause to labor well.
I would that I could say the same to-day!—
But I digress!—One night, a year
Or so from th' time of my return, while I
Was staying in New York, I ran across
Some college friends. Not being residents,
They must, of course, invade the city's haunts
Of pleasure, seeing all and spending all
They could; in common parlance, “do the
town.”

We started early in the ev'ning, went
From concert hall to concert hall, at each
One getting more and more intoxicated.—

That night I had my first of absinthe.—Soon—
That is as midnight grew to morning—we
Turned into the most fashionable house
Of ill repute in th' city. Here we let
Our pent-up spirits loose. One millionaire,
With us, who had more gold than sense and more
Intoxicants than either, ordered wines,
And called us all to drink at his expense.
It was not long before the girls came down
In force, down banisters and stairs as fast
As they could slide or run. One beauty stopped
My gaze; but till she spoke I thought her
 strange
To me. Then—then—my God!—I saw Le-
 nore!
The wild, the beautiful, the loved Lenore!
But oh! how changed! Her coltishness was
 gone.
Her chestnut curls were bleached a yellow
 white.
An artificial redness stained her cheek;
And there was calculation in her eye.
My limbs felt numb. A burning filled my
 chest.
I know not what I did; nor if I spoke.
My face must have betrayed emotion, tho;

For sudden stillness fell, and ev'ry glass
Was lowered. Lenore stood stiff. A fear, like
that

Which glitters in the eyeballs of a cat
The moment it is caught at wickedness,
Shone from her eyes; but not a word escaped
To show she knew 'twas I. The others saw;
And left the room in silence. One poor wretch
Caught up my hand and pressed it tenderly
As she passed by. God saw her deed. God saw
The tear upon her cheek, I truly b'lieve;
And God forgot her sins.—Lenore and I
Were left alone. The agony of that
Unholy interview you may surmise.
I strove to find the meaning of her fall;
But she was firm. Lenore would not unlock
Her past. 'Twas sealed, she said, and cursed
forever.

Since then I've never seen a happy hour
I've had no interest in man, nor beast,
Nor book. There is no soothing charm in
thought,

No pleasant weariness in labor. Day
Brings no desire above the wish for nightfall,
And night, no consolation but a sleep
Of drunken heaviness. I've sold my books,

Destroyed my manuscripts, undone my friend-
ships.

What money I have left I'm slowly using
'To fill my flesh, as my foul soul is filled,
With wormwood.—Friend, there's homely com-
fort in

Despair when you have touched its farthest
deeps.

Odes.

ODES.

1.

To the Cultivated Rose.

FLOWER of night ! rich emblem of the life
Of heavy-trodden cities and the sweet
And bitter passions of the strenuous heart,
Be thou my song !

Among the hill ravines
And by the unsequestered paths that lead
To mountain wilds the rock-nursed rose, thy
sister,
Makes glad the wooing air with fragrant kisses ;
But thou art fragrant to the heart of man.

In culture's halls thou and some unheard song
Alone oft' seem to be with soul. All else
Is tailored vanity and tuneless sound.
There innocence is art and modesty
The mode for tortured spirits. Thou, e'en thou,
Art called upon to breath thy perfume o'er,

And to caress with velvet touch, the white,
The naked bosoms of the vain.—And yet
It seems that we should love these gilded
triflers,

If only for thy presence; for thou
Must shadow in their souls some of thy beauty;
Some slight devotion must attend thy incense;
Some trembling voice must answer to thy song;
Thou canst not be a mere and false adornment.

Upon the streets, when night's protecting shades
Call forth to strife passions shamed by day,
Thy presence is remembrancer of good.
By day thy many-petaled form proclaims
The culture, wit and ancient rule of man.
At night it is thy nature-soul that speaks;
And when thou'rt seen upon the breast of one
Who treads life's thoroughfare in sin and sorrow
It is as an embodied prayer for pity
And for love. Be this thy greatest glory,
Flower of night!

2.

To the Lesser Passion.

Why is so small a word so loudly sounded?

Why's love

Above

Life's proudest passions pealed? Why so
expounded?

It seems that ev'ry song sings love;

And ev'ry oath stings love;

And ev'ry prayer brings love;

And ev'ry worthy tale wrings love

From life's strange sequence.

But why this frequency,

This abuse

Of love's use?

Why is so small a word so cruelly hounded?

Is life accomplished in love's smiles and tears?

Can kisses halt or speed the circling years?

Is man's life goal to be a woman's arms?

Is labor's meed a taste of fleshly charms?—

No, fool! Say not that lover's love is more

Than fleshly, that the spirit we adore.
'Tis just as true that stomachs crave to eat
The bovine spirit rather than the meat.
Speak not in moony phrases, vaguely wild,
As if thy public were some slobb'ring child.
Speak bravely, fool! Is living's gift this thing
Of which the nimble-worded songsters sing?

O God! the same unvaried note,
The flutter of a petticoat,
A trifling ballad learned by rote
And warbled from each warbling throat,
Is all the answer made.
Have men then grown afraid
To face truth's twining blade?
Or do their tongues confess
That they believe and bless
The kissing-cussedness?

I doubt not many hearts have yearned for love;
Nor many more shall yearn, and yearn in vain.
I doubt not tears have flown, nor tears shall flow
For love. I doubt not lips unkissed must fade;
I doubt not love's tempestuous, torrid bliss;
Nor doubt I love's low-aching, longing pains.
But oh! fond harpist, strike thy harp anew;
For there's a higher joy, a deeper woe

To the Lesser Passion. 161

You leave unsounded,—yea! a joy, a woe
Surpassing love as love surpasses hate;—
The joy of being all thyself, of doing
The most thy soul would strive to do; the woe
Of war which leads to naught but loss of
 strength,
Of years of toil which only hunger leave,
Of living in consumptive rottenness
Upon the social dung heap of the world;
The joy that Jesus knew and Shakespeare felt;
The woe that makes for millions daily hell:
These sing, young singer!—Strike a chord of
 splendor,
Let loose a shaking thunder from the strings
That stretch thy harp! And wake the slum-
 brous souls
Of men! And drown the empty flute voice!
 Drown
The lesser passion's treble with thy song!
Sing joy and woe surpassing woman love!

On the Close of the Century.

Our dreams of our own importance have come
to pathetic ending;
And a few small truths have struck to the
ground our colossal romances.
Our creeds, our conceits and our close-knit
metaphysical systems
Tumbled, and beat the dust in our faces. Then
like children
Untoyed we fell weeping, prayed to, cursed and
refashioned our Godhead.
Pale, whimpering, pitiful, stepped we to our
labors.
No hope seemed ahead. Our immortal part as
a vapor vanished;
And the fools, who believed that a failure in
this in another existence
Might prove success, made moan, and, in
picture, in song and in story,

On the Close of the Century. 163

Repeated their mean, weak note of decadence.

A mystic insanity

Seized on our art and our thinking, made us
do honor to madness.

The century died; and its last articulate sound
was of torment;

Its last out-belching gasp was deep from the
bowels, and rotten.

But let the earth receive its dead. New eyes

Look on and read the meaning of the stars.

Fresh minds rethink the problems of our world.

Young hearts beat brave with passion, long for
war,

And flutter not at sounds of failure. Death

Becomes a quiet cadence to a song;

And night brings coolness, clustered stars, and
sleep.

No longer are we troubled by the fall

Of creeds; their echoes faint on empty shores;

And truth, in mansions new, forgets the old.

The academic systems built of words

And wind have ceased to be our law in thought.

We smile at childish Platonisms garbed

In German phrases; small ideas obscured

By vast vocabularies lose their charm

When understood; men read, but men forget.—
Our thought now grows in calmness, leaves the
Cosmos;

And man to man becomes our problem. Clear
The blind, the hot-teared fever leaves our eyes;
And nature seems less mad as we cease sobbing.
A saner light throws even shadows on
The sand. The sea takes on a quiet motion,
A not unholy perfume fills the wood.
The heavens move in happy meditation;
No more for man, but none the less sublimely.
A new light burns upon the morning hills.
And love leads human feet up widening path-
ways.

Man leaves the cloud; but rises from the dust.

Oh! wake, my soul, to the depth of the passion
of living!

Awake, my age, to the worth and the glory of
doing!

Thrust back on the mouldy past

Its holy babbling.

Return to the wretched past

Its tearful treasure.

Think new; and speak with strength to the
heart

On the Close of the Century. 165

When it falters.

Think once; think deep; and quicken thy
thought

Into action.

Let the blaze of the swift-leaping lightning—
The wild gorges revealing and bright'ning—

Be torch-light to lead thee!

Let the sound of the sky-splitting thunder,
As it rends the cloud-billows asunder

Be music to speed thee!

While injustice remains,

While a poverty stains

The fair-flowered fields of the earth, fight
on!

While a gold-lust remains,

While a tyranny sprains

The backs of thy laboring sons, fight on!

Thy mission, my age, is to act, not to dream
nor to doubt;

Lead, therefore, thy legions of battle, thy ty-
rants to rout!

Nature :
A Poem—Symphony.

NATURE: A POEM—SYMPHONY.

Introduction.

WHAT, O Nature, is thy meaning?
What mystery lurks in thy manifold forms?
Is the beat of the wave on the rock,
And the whirl of the wind on the plain,
But words in a thoughtless speech?
Is the storm a strength insane?
And all thy multi-toned music no more than
the echo of emptiness?
Are the stars then an ordered delusion?
And the questioner man but a mockery added
to waste?
Is thy beauty an idiot smile?
And pain but the symbol of nothingness?
Or art thou, Nature, the voice of an infinite
logic—
An eternal and embodied truth?
What, O Nature, is thy meaning?

The Forest.

THIS question assailed me
On a soft and melodious summer morning as
 I entered the shade of a wood.
The forest was cool.
And from its shadowed depths came a con-
 fusion of broken and minor harmonies;
The fluttering laughter of leaves intertwined
 with the pearl-driple of bird notes,
Playing in cadenzic modulations o'er the deep-
 toned sigh of bending boughs.
I entered the forest, and, throwing myself on a
 bed of grass and leaves,
Waited for the magic music to soothe me into
 slumber.
Above my head a sky, as blue as that which fol-
 lows on a storm,
Was framed in fragments by a broken leaf-
 cloud,
Upon whose many sides of green
The crystal sun-spray gayly danced.
Down thru a long and columned aisle I saw an
 open glade,

Where many-colored flowers bloomed, a sunset
in the grass ;
And where birds hopped between their bursts
of song ;
And butterflies tinted by the fairies of the dawn
Made graceful tangles in the air.
Across this glade a slender brooklet found a
tortured path,
To lose itself among the trees beyond.
And over and throughout all these beauties,
From oak and elm and maple bough,
From bush and encumbering vine
Fluttered the soft-scattered voicings of the deni-
zens of the forest.
But soon the wind, whose verdured-sweetened
breath
Till now had only come in sleepy gasps, awoke
in strength
And smote with big breathings the oaken strings
of Nature's harp.
The forest then trembled throughout,
And was filled with a song
Which, in my dreaming, I understood.
Serene thru the years of storm and of calm ;
Draped in a veiling of snow, or enrobed in green
glory ;

From the clouds taking tears, from the sun
taking balm;
We chant to the winds our Æolian psalm.*

Blow, ye disturbers of heaven.
Blow, ye destroyers of peace.
Blow, and we'll answer with singing
Blow, that we never may cease.

We shelter the life which flees to our shade,
Kingly o'er scept'ring the birds and the beasts
with our branches.
In our gentle dominions the tempests are laid,
And feverish winds are in dew's arrayed.

Blow, then, disturbers of heaven.
Blow, ye destroyers of peace.
Blow, for we'll soften thy fierceness.
Blow till thy breathings shall cease

Our soul is forever kingly and high;
Glad but in reigning we question nor winds nor
the waters;
And when age in the mantle of darkness wings
nigh,

* Psalm is used here in the Greek sense and means a song to a harp accompaniment.

Our brows are unbent from the crowning sky.

Blow, ye disturbers of heaven.

Blow, ye destroyers of peace.

Blow till the world shall be silenced.

Blow till all living shall cease.

So sang the patriarchs,

Who, in their majesty, cast a happy twilight on
the place beneath,

And gave a home and protection unto thou-
sands.

So sang they, and then fell into imperial si-
lence;

While a nearby gurgling spring answered with
its liquid melody

The sweeping music of the forest kings.

I heard, and looked, and at my side

Beheld an ever-flowing cup

From whose mossed and pebbled depths swelled
forth a spring,

And bubbled into song.

I am a little gurgling spring.

I hold no state, nor am I king.

When I am dead no flag is furled;

For I'm the workman of the world.

My birth is in the silver hills.
From whence I work, thru little rills,
To where I burst out as a spring,
And unto earth a verdure bring.

From spring to river I then grow,
And to the sea I softly flow;
Or I am drawn unto the sky,
To fall in rain as time goes by.

If I should die, then all would die.
If I were not, the world would lie,
A stagnant mass abroad in space,
Without a smile to light its face.

When I am dry the whole world thirsts;
And if I'm chained the mountain bursts.
I wear no glory, hold no state;
Yet I am stronger than the great.

I turn aside for broken boughs,
And on my breast the lilies drowse.
Yet, tho my strength be e'erso slight,
Earth holds no force can brook my might.

I cut down granite mountain chains.
I dam up oceans; build up plains.

I slave along from age to age,
And story nature's empty page.

I have no rest; nor know I years;
I feel no hopes; nor suffer fears.
I know alone my simple task.
And more than this I never ask.

I am a little gurgling spring.
I hold no state, nor am I king.
When I am dead no flag is furled;
For I'm the workman of the world.

I wondered as I listened to these water-warbled
words,
Which came unto my searching spirit
As a voice from light through darkness—
As a song from nature's crystal soul—
To speak of resignation in the narrow circle
of a duty
Compassing sweet music and the perfume of a
thousand joys,
And bound about by unfathomable infinities.
I wondered; but my heart was beating
For a harmony beyond the mist-music of these
waters,

And longed to hear the silent voice speak out
in revelation.

I waited eagerly till a low call from birdland
Trembled thru the verdure.

Then, like one who bends his gaze to grasp the
glories of the down-departing day,
And sees a robin breast wing out the western
sky,

I gave my soul unto the smaller joy,
And in the beauty of the bird's bright song
Found a moment of untainted peace.

*Sweet we call, wake we all
When the day's in the dawn.
Virgin beams, waking dreams
Are the dower of dawn,
And the theme we sing.

Hopping nigh, sailing high
From the dew till the dusk;
Trilling glad, chanting sad
We encounter the dusk
As we greet the dawn.

* This song imitates in its meter three of the
principal robin calls.

Love we sing, peace we bring
 To the sad of the earth.
 Beauty's joy, pure and coy,
 Is our song to the earth
 In the day and dusk.

Night is nigh; voices die;
 And the echo of morn
 Fills our song, swells it strong
 With the hope of a morn,
 As we fly from earth
 For fair, far, full-flown fields.

So sang the birds,
 As, hopping mid the studded grass,
 They kissed the dew from flower cups,
 Or, flying down from branch to bough,
 Caught the sunshine beams a-tip.
 They sang; and the leaves and vines and flowers
 Murmured in answer melodies
 Which sounded like the warm sigh of a thou-
 sand flutes.
 But as I listened, filled anew with hope,
 The ground, the trees, and all about seemed to
 sink beneath me
 Till in the air, alone, I rested.

The leaves below me lolled in emerald billows,
And made a sea which stretched unbroken to
the end of sight,
And thru which now autumnal hues mingled
with the green,
In somber magnificence.
Within the west the heaven filled with foam of
blood and gold;
A pink and feathery fire flaked the zenith;
Thin cirrus vapors, gray and lavender, shivered
up the eastern dome;
And back of all gleamed pale the faded sky
From which a solitary star shone forth.
'Twas thus for one brief moment,
That earth and heaven, like happy angels robed
in glory,
Blinked their sleepy eyes before they closed
them in mutual slumber.
Then, as night drew over all her veiling of dark,
I heard the multitudinous leaves rustle to the
ground,
And saw the naked monarchs of the wood
Standing like black ghosts in lesser darkness.
But soon the limpid moon appeared
And showed me all the forest shrouded in scin-
tillating ice,

Which cast in all directions back
The pale radiance of the orb of night,
I waited eager to behold more splendors than I
 saw,
And thinking to hear a voice speak from the
 night
The meaning of the forest and its beauty,
When lo! 'twas gone,
And I was left in darkness.

The Ocean.

It seemed an age till in the east
The misty beams of morn began
To loose the drapes of night; and then
I saw that all about was changed.
I stood before a sobbing sea,
From whence I saw the water hills
Rise from the liquid, level plain,
And fall again into a trough,
Or roll and slap the inclined shore.
I watched the morning blend the night,
And heard with awe the moaning sound,
The music-sound, of falling waves.
I felt the cool and sea-born breeze
Blow round me and upon my face.
I saw and heard the ocean's life;
And deep within I felt the charm,
The sweet yet melancholy charm,
Of being near to see and hear
The water's endless ebb and flow,
To hear the ocean's heavy rhyme,
Its inwave beat of three-fold time,
Its rolling harmony sublime.

While looking on I saw this picture change.
The gentle breeze became a whipping wind.
The wind grew stronger, and became a gale
Which in its fury scourged the mobile seas,
And swept the seething water into heaps.
It blew—it howled—it shrieked—it raged!
Like ten-fold tempests wrenched from hell,
And hurled against the surface of the sea.
It dragged a clotted eloud from east to west,
Bedusking everything and blotting out the
 heavens.

The storm winds caught me likewise,
Tore me off my feet, and dragged me thru the
 air

Above the insane, swollen seas.
On I flew thru rain and wind and darkness;
Lashed on every side by great, gray, whirling
 water gusts,
And harrowed by successive bursts of storm
 artillery.

On within the gale, betwixt convulsive sea and
 sky, I flew;
And half in awe and half in mad intoxication,
Sang out my thoughts,
Accompanied by the crash of thunders, cry of
 winds, and roar of waves.

From broken depths of sea and sky
Tear tempest all the sounds, and cry
The harmony of rage!

Eternal ocean, fearful, grand,
Reechoed by the trembling land,
Bend up thy hugest waves!

Unwilled wild whirlwind thunder-fanged,
Release all torrents earthward hanged,
And lash the sea to foam!

Cloud-palléd heaven cold and proud,
Earth's battle canopy and shroud,
In darkness tomb the storm!

And tempest, full with fury, shake
The ocean's inmost soul, and break
The silence of the sea!

Loud I sang these words;
But, tho my voice was resonant with wildest
longing,
It was smothered in the volume of the tempest
That it sounded like the droning of a single bee
Above some seething rapids.

The song had barely left my lips,
Had hardly touched the air,
Ere heaven crushed it twixt her thunders,
And sent a rugged, livid lightning shaft
Into th' bosom o' the sea,
With a sound like that o' tons o' molten iron
falling into water.

This flash was followed by another and another
in succession,

Till atmosphere and sea were perforated,
And rumped heaven laced
With intertwining lightnings;
Till every lumped and sullen cloud above,
And all the frothy mountainous sea below
Re-echoed one unbroken roll of thunder,
And reflected one continuous glare of hellish
light.

In the very midst of this unreined confusion
(One moment skimming in a valley
Deep and mountain-bound by waves whose shat-
tered tops grasped hand-like at the
clouds,

And high hurled above the highest peak)
I rode upon the winds, I know not how.

Once in my course from trough to crest

I saw a splendid sight;
A large steel man-of-war, a human engine of
 destruction,
Was wrestling with the storm,
And plunging log-like 'mid the waves.
Her masts were gone.
Her guns were mute.
Her metal muscles groaned and trembled with
 each separate shock.
And, tho her engines toiled to pain,
She was a helpless lump upon the sea.
Her lights were lit, and shone weirdly in the
 lurid lightning glare;
While from her cabins and her hold
A mangled mass of sounds arose and struggled
 with the noisy air—
A mingling of prayers and groans, of cries and
 curses
So strangled by the thunder,
That, tho close beside the ship,
I scarce could hear.
A moment more, and we were separated;
I rising o'er a summit,
And the steel ship falling in a valley.
No sooner had the vessel touched the trough,
Than a triple bolt of lightning fell upon

And nailed her for a moment twixt the ocean
and the clouds.

Then, as the thunder split the air,
A dull explosion and the sound of ripping steel
Came from the vessel's hull.

Thrown on end she rose once more upon the
summit of a rising wave,

And, with the falling of that wave,
Sank out of sight forever.

The sea swelled o'er where she had sunk;
And the spirit of the storm smiled in fire.

The ship sank bubble-wreathed into the ocean's
ooze,

Sank into the calm and continent-building deep,
And I, soul-weary with the tempest, followed.
As I descended in the heavy emerald,
And passed the sea's strange, silent peoples,
A feeling of wonder and of awe came cold upon
me;

There seemed to move within the deep a soul—
The ocean's soul,
To which the winds and waves are but the out-
ward life.

Above is passion and beauty and pain,
A restless eternity with a few passing smiles

Is the outward life of the sea.

Destruction is hers; and her voice is thick with
thunder.

She rends the rock from the ragged shore,
And crumbles it with her waves.

The tempest she bears on her bosom;
And the land she drains of its dust and its
waters.

But beneath is peace.

No rage discolours the inner sea;
And strength is here neither restless nor wild.
All sounds are ennobled in silence;
And the sands of destruction which sink from
the waves

Are built into land for the morrow.

To me the soul of the ocean spoke not, nor
ceased from her labor;

And I rose from the deep and from the waves.

Above the tempest rolled afar and faint.

The gale subsided to a gentle wind.

The thick clouds parted and unveiled the sky;
And nature donned the majesty of night.

The Heavens.

THE breeze blew soft and slow as when it shuts
The eyelids of the rose. The fume of waves
And folds of harmony from sea and air
It bore. A spark-dewed, moonless, stainless
deep

Of blue, extending darkness domed the sea
Whose rounded waves engulfed the edging stars.
The constellations and the hosts of space
In leaning circles passed from east to west.
And all alone I lay upon the breeze—
As hour by hour the deep grew thick with
stars—

And faced the mightiness, the mystery
Of night. The sun has lit and laid the world
Before my eyes, from daisy-spotted dell
To snowed cathedral crag, ere this; but night,
Now gleaming with abysmal glory, showed
The worlds and suns beyond. A stillness
grew,—

And with fast-breathing awe I gazed above—
And then I turned my eyes below, to find
The ocean far beneath, unseen but for

The dim and moving gloam of mirrored stars.
Yet even this ere long was lost from sight.

For many thousand midnight miles I rose,
And, turning, left the shadow of our world.
Behind me, half-illuminated, rolled the globe
Which, in the wilderness of heaven, bears
The name of earth. Too frail it seemed for all
Its weight of wonders; small, indeed, to bear
Its cargo of uncounted souls across
Eternity. And when I thought that all
We know of nature and of life is fixed
Upon this midget minion of the sun,
The centuries of man became but as
A day, His woes and wars, the marbles raised,
And empires built memorial of his pride,
To meanness shrank. His labored progress now
An infant's playing seemed. The tide of tears,
Which daily sweeps the smooth and broken
shore,

Became a ripple on the infinite.

And as I gazed upon the human orb—
Cloud-tufted like a half-blown cotton bush,
And held in overwhelming space by force
Unseen—I woke from life's unknowing sleep,
And, thru the vision of my soul, beheld

Our world—a rose, o’ershadowed by its leaves,
Amid a field of flowers; our life—a dream,
A moment’s passing dream, among the dawns
And days and dusks of nature. “Peace to
thee!”

I cried, and sang farewell, as earth last fell
From view, and distance dimmed the suns’
fierce light.

World of granite and steel,
Of laden mart and of plunging keel,
Of trampled town and of ceaseless wheel,
World of granite and steel,
Farewell!

World of bronze and of clay,
Of flowing blood and the blatant fray,
Of death decreed by a long decay,
World of bronze and of clay,
Farewell!

World of gold and of wine,
Of towered hall and of candled shrine,
Of moistened lips and of flowered vine,
World of gold and of wine,
Farewell!

World of lilies and snow,
Of answer soft and of music low,
Of sadness touched with a silver glow,
World of lilies and snow,
Farewell!

World of shadow and night,
Of chords unheard in their upward flight,
Of lamps that burn with a rayless light,
World of shadow and night,
Farewell!

These words but sung, and sun and satellites
Were visions of a moment ever past.
And I moved on thru centuries of void,
Upon whose dark a hermit wreath of stars
Threw mists of timid light; till nearing sight
Resolved the stars into unnumbered suns
And billioned myriads of bowling worlds
Which made our orb and its attending spheres
Seem like a bubble on an endless sea.
Amid this maze I wandered till I spied
A violet star; and there I paused for rest.

The atmosphere about this world was thick
With drowsy odors; hyacinth and rose

And violet. Clustered lily-sprinkled lakes
Abounded everywhere; but not a sea.
Cool spider streams leapt laughingly in air,
And, broken by the breeze, fell pattering
On reeded thimble-pools. Glad orioles
And warblers filled the brush with lilts of song.
The day declined in long and silver beams
Amid the foliage of purple birch
And willow trees; and spirit figures danced,
With sigh-invaded laughter, over hill
And dale, or slept on wind-rocked branches.

Love

Here lingered. Pleasure filled her cup with
white

And yellow wine, and drank to every bud
That bloomed and every singing bird. And
here,

Forgetful of my mind's unmoistened thirst,
I lingered, tempting dreams, until my soul,
Bereft of all accustomed strife and pain,
Once more began to hope and search beyond
The moment's joy. And then, like one who
leaves

A kind yet fathomed friend, I took my flight
For other worlds—again a wanderer.

When next I paused it was before a chill
And secret star o'er which was closely drawn
The coverlets of snowy, timeless sleep;
And unto which a haloed play of light,
In paling rose and golden green, gave form
And glory to the cold. The orb was bare
Of living things, but for a single beast;
A polar lion trailed his silver mane,
And called in frozen thunder tones across
The bleak-blown folds of ice. 'Twas silence
here

I read as plain as tho 'twere writ upon
The sheeted crags and solid seas below.
I looked upon this world, but lingered not;
For wisdom was my quest, and here she slept.

From star to star I flew; and moved, within
Eternal night or thru unending day,
Until my guideless flight was checked before
A small, companionless, and hiding world
Which cast a fire like that reflected when
The winter moonlight strikes a bar of blue-
Toned steel. This orb was scarred by many
storms,

And rusty cañons laced the single isle
Which made the planet's land. Unwatered hills

Rose ragged in the gray and purple sky.
A heavy darkness hung above the sea
A little way beyond the shore where now
I stood; and wailing waters licked a land
Which neither wept nor smiled. No beast nor
bird

Nor blade of green I found upon this world;
But only rock in brown and broken mass.
Here melancholy made her home; and here
In endless twilight nature pondered on
The uselessness of things. Yet still around
Its sun the planet circled, breaking not
For once its ancient, meditative pace.

In silent flight I left this bitter world,
And traveled system after system o'er.
I visited the spheres where more than man
Resides; but, hearing, could not comprehend
The people's lofty converse. Beings less
Than man could teach me naught, for these I
topped

In wisdom. Man, and only man, can voice
A thought to human understanding. Him
I found at length. I skimmed across his fields
Which groaned beneath a heaviness of grain.
I flew above his towns; tremendous piles,

With tower, spire, and dome, and angled roof
All tinted in autumnal hues, and set
Upon high, sloping, flower-covered hills.
Rich cities, gaudy in the glare of day,
Or mellow with the three-mooned glow of night,
Like giant opals rose on every side.

And over many such I passed, but stopped
Not till I came unto a ribboned plain,
Where all the people were assembled forth
To celebrate some great festivity.

On coming closer to the multitude,
I saw that some, above the rest, were couched
In overflowing luxury, and gowned
In lilac, green, and azure velvets. Then,
Below them, bending meanly in the dust,
I saw a drove of lesser human brutes—
Bent-backed and milk-eyed by unceasing toil,
And by their crowded life beneath the ground.
This multitude looked on with gaping mouth,
And listened eagerly to one who spoke
To them of future ease and happiness.
This priest—for such he was—told them of
love.

He said that in the sun there reigned a god
Who, when they died, took them above and gave
Surcease of pain for all eternity, .

If during life they bore their miseries
Without rebellion, murmur, or complaint;
But if they dared to raise their hands in war
Against their masters or the ordered way,
The future would be spent with swamp-bred
snakes

Upon one of the cold and slimy moons.
The priest then paused, and, drawing on a robe
Of strange design and savage ornament,
Called down a benediction on the mob.
This done, the people groveled in the dirt,
Spit on themselves, and wailed a hymn of
praise

Which filled me with such sadness that I cursed
My kind, and plunged once more among the
stars.

“Now let my eyes behold the end of man,
And death proclaim what life denies,” I cried.
And, speaking, stepped upon a lifeless world,
From where I stopped, and, toward the left, my
gaze

First fell upon a waveless sea, to which
The clouds, like clots of mould, clung fast.
Upon

My right a ruined city reared its walls,

As tho to mark the final goal of man's
Ambitious discontent. The buildings stood
The same as first the light had seen them, save
That now they housed but emptiness. An arch
Of triumph spanned the city's center square;
And many marble monuments proclaimed
A few forgotten names, once held in high
Repute for deeds of slaughter, pride, or love.
The trees stood leafless, sapless, stiff with years;
And vines like withered serpents clung upon
The walls of crumpled homes. The harp and
horn

Reposed in their accustomed places. Pipe
And violin lay sleeping with their songs.
In each uncandled, prayerless hall of prayer
The organ stood, most eloquently mute;
And nature's harmony, with man's, death held
Forever silent. Books of wisdom, soul,
And story, binding all that world had lived,
Lay round in heaps, the pages gone, decayed.
And mart, and palace, theater, and home,
And street were heavy with the dust of man.
"Speak forth, ye stones! What means this
empty shell?

Do things of passing youth and glory live
To mark the sceptered soul's unworthy grave?

Is still decay the end of striving? Cold,
Unechoed calm, the closing of the soul's
Imprisoned song ?—Resound !—Ungrave !—
Unlock

Thy silence, tomb of all the yesterdays!"
In answer to my cry a statue fell
From some brave-garnished building near, and
broke
Across my path. The echoes mocked my voice.

My soul, by anguish maddened, strove no more,
From sep'rate worlds, eternal truths to learn;
But rushed thru space (while suns, and worlds,
and moons,

And lesser orbs, in maelstrom swirl about
My form dissolved themselves), dashed on to
find

The end—the realm where all vibrations cease,
Where nature is no more, the pit of dark
And utter nakedness—in hopes that here,
Before the awful void, my soul might find
A cause for that which is. I sped in vain.
However far I went, still more remained.
Faint stars still beckoned thru a waste of years.
They formed an evening dew beneath my feet;
And overhead a cloud of broken light;

And all around a downward-streaming veil
Of fiery dust. To them my hopes went out.
I made my last appeal, and bade them speak,
Unfolding nature's meaning to my soul.
Before my voice had lost itself in space,
A tone of deepening power and beauty rose
From out the farthest-seeming star;—a tone
Which blended tears and laughter, kisses, pray-
ers,
The sounds of dying woe, the breath of winds,
The forest's heavy moan, the meadow-sigh,
The stream's soft babble on the plain, and roar
Among the hills, the countless chirps of half-
Revealed compassion, tenderness and love,
The sweep of storms, and, over all, the sad
Soft thunder of inrushing waters. Stars,
By tens of thousands, added each a tone
Till all eternity was full with song
(Save here and there, where lifeless worlds
made brief
Suspending pauses in the music). Count
By count the volume grew. The stars dis-
solved,
The heat and light and life vibrations all
Were modulated into sound; and heaven heaved
In harmony,—a steady, solemn throb, a song

Of great content, to which the passing years
beat time.

Round! Round! Round!
Filling the limitless void with light and with
motion;
Lost in the maze of our numbers,—wavelets
in ocean;
Surging and striving, with progress pointed
still onward;
Swept by emotions of hope and striving be-
gotten,
Emotions deep-felt, but, with time past, for-
gotten;
Surge we still onward.

Fury and gentleness fill us, mould and remould
us;
Calmness and longing attend our flight and en-
fold us;
While joy in the sense of a motion immortal
Moves us still onward.

Round! Round! Round!
We circle to pulse-beats unending;
We bow to an order unbending;

Nor question nor know we the reason the
source of the power;
Content, thru the ages acquired, transcend-
ing the hour,
Sweeps us still onward.

In this stage of my dream I woke
To find myself still lying on the bed of leaves
and grass.
The birds were chirping cheerfully throughout
the wood.
The spring gushed from its mossed and pebbled
cup in measured melody.
A slow wind shook the bows,
Which seemed to repeat, in hushed refrain,
The full, supernal music of the stars,
And thru a crevice in the canopy of leaves
An eastward-slanting sunbeam fell and played
upon my face.



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